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# THE EMPEROR KARL





# THE EMPEROR KARL

*by*

ARTHUR COUNT POLZER-HODITZ

*Translated from the German by*

*D. F. TAIT and F. S. FLINT*

"Fate shuffles the cards and we play"

SCHOPENHAUER

PUTNAM

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## THE EMPEROR KARL



## INTRODUCTION

I BEGAN writing my reminiscences at the time of the Revolution. Up to that period, political passions inspired by hate and ill-will towards the Hapsburg Monarchy and the last champions of the old Austrian traditions, had only dared to show their heads sporadically, here and there. But now that control was relaxed, they burst out unchecked, like evil demons, from the most hidden nooks and corners, and proceeded to weave a loathsome web of lies and slander over historical truth. To my dismay, I found that the history of the last years of our old Monarchy had been distorted out of all recognition, partly by serious politicians from tendencious motives, partly by irresponsible gossips, exploiting the demand for sensational news. So I began, in desultory articles at first, to set the real facts, as shown in my notes and reminiscences, against the caricatures I encountered in the Press and in post-war literature. It soon became evident, however, that no explanations could be of any value to the public unless events were set out in their context and necessary development from given conditions. Such was the origin of this book. I offer it to the public as an attempt at a pragmatical account of the disruption of the Monarchy. At the same time, it is an attempt at a historical description of the reign of the Emperor Karl, as I saw it in my post as the Emperor's chief private secretary for civil affairs.

All that has hitherto been written about the reign of the Emperor Karl has been largely inspired by party-political interest, national prejudice, feelings of personal animosity, and lack of insight into the Emperor's true nature and character. It consists of fabulous legends invented and only too readily believed in the full tide of republican and national passion. Legends arise and legends remain. I know that quite well. They continue to exist alongside of incontestably established facts. The aim of my book is assuredly not to try to convince those who prefer legends and sensa-

tions to the sober truth, or those who refuse to be disturbed in their stubbornly arbitrary judgment of political conditions and events by facts which are inconsistent with this judgment. My object is to give intelligent people who seek truth, unbiassed by any preconceptions and passions, a perhaps not unwelcome explanation of many circumstances which have not yet been explained. For I have not been able to discover the truth about the Emperor Karl in any of the numerous accounts of politics in the World War which have so far been published. The Emperor is almost universally misrepresented, and that from interested motives. I was among the few who had been intimate with the Emperor from his earliest youth. I saw him in everyday life and in critical situations. My knowledge of his personality was thus not superficial nor derived from incidental intercourse arising out of our discussions of Government business. It is based on experience gained from almost twenty years of contact with the Emperor. I, therefore, feel that it is both my mission and my duty to set the true picture of the Emperor Karl against the caricatures which hatred and ill will have drawn of him.

But it is not only the personality of my gracious Emperor and master, now with God, that is described in this book, but also the inheritance which he took over during the World War, with all the historical burdens and political ties encumbering it. These are almost universally overlooked; and yet they had a decisive, practically a compelling influence on the course of events. In order to understand the reign of the Emperor Karl, it is absolutely necessary to take them into account.

At the time when I had occasion to give political advice to the Emperor, the point of view of the convinced Austrian was strongly represented in very wide circles of the nation, in the sound sentiments of the Austrian civil service, among the nobility and clergy and in the Army. In the political field, however, in the national-chauvinistic section of the middle classes and among literary men, its representatives were few and far between. To-day, after the collapse of the Empire, it is almost entirely abandoned and forgotten in political life. My book can only hope to evoke quiet

agreement in the few who still remain faithful to the old Austrian traditions. It will arouse opposition from all those who, on account of their social-revolutionary or national-chauvinistic sentiments and actions, which were inconsistent with the Austrian political idea, cannot be acquitted of a share in the blame for the ruin of the Monarchy, and who now swim in the turbid stream of social and national animosities, and can dare to raise their voices.

The Austrian point of view was not popular, because by its nature it demanded a certain spirit of renunciation from all camps, whereas the general current was running in the opposite direction. National differences had been visibly reinforced in the last decades of the Monarchy by the agitation of the national leaders, and had finally degenerated into implacable hate. The aims of the various races became more irreconcilable from day to day; their insistence on their own claims at the expense of the interests of other nations became more and more clamorous. Anyone who wished to maintain his political position had to howl with the wolves in one of the camps, he had to swim with the current. That had long been the secret of easy political success. But anyone who wished to affirm the Austrian idea had to swim against the current; for the Austrian idea was rooted in the principle of conciliation, while the universal political watchword was hate. The national States which have replaced the old Monarchy were engendered in this hate. Their incapacity to survive is becoming increasingly evident. The impoverishment into which the peoples of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire have sunk almost without exception—since in their implacable hate they have closed their frontiers against each other—is the most striking proof of how indispensable political and economic union was for all these little nations, which are incapable of independent existence, and what a blessing their economic autarchy is to them! To-day it has become a fashionable political catchword to represent the destruction of the Monarchy not as something to be regretted, but as a liberation from “fetters that had become intolerable,” which bound the various nations together for the sole purpose of preserving the hereditary dominion of the dynasty. But



poverty and misery are slowly beginning to teach them that the mission of the House of Austria was not dynastic, but that Austria's dynastic mission was pre-eminently a political and economic one.

The tradition of a super-national attitude was developed in the Hapsburg dynasty. They had for long looked upon it as their mission to find a just *via media* among the contradictory claims of many nations. And the Emperor Karl himself, by his repeated attempts to eradicate national hatreds, by his efforts for peace, which only the lack of understanding and of loyal support on the part of his responsible advisers prevented from succeeding, and by his advocacy of international disarmament, gave proof that he was concerned not with ruling the nations but with bringing them together. Every well-informed person knows that, if these efforts did not attain their object, the blame was not due to him, but, on the one hand, to the opposition which the dynasty encountered, especially among the Magyars, Czechs, and Poles, who were always insisting on their historic rights, and, on the other hand, to the external difficulties arising out of the menace of Pan-Slavism and Pan-Serbism, and the powerlessness of Austria in face of Berlin.

Nor was national reconciliation, the reorganization of Austria on the principle of equal rights for all the nationalities, wrecked through any lack of goodwill and understanding on the part of the Emperor, but on the lack of goodwill on the part of the Austrian Parliament, the opposition of the monopolist leaders of Hungary, and the lack of understanding and energy which the responsible advisers of the Crown displayed towards these great questions. No other view can be maintained before the Court of history. The truth is that the reconciliation of the nations had long been the tradition of the dynasty, as it was their natural interest—they could indeed have no greater interest—and the truth is that it was the Honourable deputies both of the former representative body as well as of the House of Deputies which succeeded it, who mutually encouraged the various peoples to persecute each other, whether from love of the people or for love of their seats remains open to question.

Political conditions in Hungary assume a comparatively

large place in my picture. This was done deliberately, and, I think, rightly, for the problem "Austria," as will be seen from my book, to a large extent had its roots in the problem "Hungary." It was the Magyars who by their separatist ambitions, their turbulent demands for complete independence, dealt the first serious blow to the power of the Hapsburg monarchy, and invoked similar efforts on the part of the Slavs. In the German Empire public opinion was inadequately, and, to a large extent, wrongly informed about the Monarchy. The reason for this lay in the fact that the leading Magyar politicians undertook to inform the Germans in the Empire, maintained a permanent political information bureau in Berlin, and took care that everything was interpreted as they wished it to be. This absence of correct understanding of the conditions and political movements in Hungary on the part both of the Germans and also of the majority of Austrian politicians and statesmen, was one of the chief obstacles to the constitutional reorganization of the Dual Monarchy which the accession of a new Emperor would have made possible.

As my position enabled me to acquire a profound insight into the influence of Hungary on the fate of the Hapsburg Empire at a decisive period in history, I thought it my duty to devote considerable space to an account of the circumstances which, as I was convinced by observation, were of decisive importance for the course of events.

The many Magyar politicians who asserted that I was the enemy of the Hungarian nation merely made use of a sure and always popular expedient for avoiding being drawn into an inconvenient discussion of facts. But I will convincingly defend myself against this reproach. It is true that, from the standpoint of the common interests of all parts of the Dual Monarchy, I disapproved of the policy of the Magyars as well as of the means which many Magyar politicians employed to defend their separate interests. I disapproved of the action of the political leaders of Hungary in exploiting the national feeling of the Magyars to train up the younger generation to mad ambition and political arrogance, so that this artificially propagated chauvinism might provide fresh troops for their struggle for purely selfish ends. I regarded

the intolerance of Hungarian politicians towards the other nationalities as unstatesmanlike, and I loathed the insincerity with which they disavowed this intolerance. I deeply deplored the fact that a large number of the Hungarian leaders fostered hatred against the German race and against Austria among the people—though not with complete success; I regarded the whole thing as dangerous and harmful to the interests not only of the Hapsburg Empire as a whole, but to those of Hungary also. Yet I do not hesitate to affirm that I always looked on the Magyars as one of the finest elements in the population of the Monarchy. I lived a great deal in Hungary, and know many Magyars and number many of them among my personal friends. I have seen the Magyar peasant at work and at home, and I may say that I have rarely found in any nation so much warmheartedness, so much love for soil and fatherland, and such a happy blend of healthy joyousness and seriousness in their attitude to life, as I have found in the Magyars. Go into a Hungarian peasant home or into the home of one of the landed gentry, and you will be rejoiced to know that such vigorous, happy, and honest people exist, people who are such a happy mixture of sound conservatism and liberal principles. Their dignified and sincere character, the personal bravery they have always shown, not least in the World War, stamp them as a noble race of the highest quality. Moreover, the great majority of the Magyar rural population and the nobility, especially the higher nobility, remained true to the dynasty, in spite of the chauvinist policy of many national leaders, of whose aims and objects they, being more or less detached from politics, were not always aware. For the domain of politics was tainted and impregnated with the poison of Magyar vanity. This characteristic was the ruin of the Magyars. Conscienceless politicians, with Kossuth and his followers and successors at their head, exploited this characteristic by flattering the people in order to win adherents cheaply. They exacerbated the national vanity into fanatical self-love and intolerance of peoples of other race and speech, political arrogance, and megalomania. This morbidly exaggerated vanity had a strong influence on the undeniably excellent traits of the Magyars. It made them

blind, and prevented them from being aware of their real position. They did not see that for them, a small country with an alien tongue, wedged in between powerful races, at a time when the cry for national rights was being raised, salvation lay not in a stubborn, out-of-date insistence on historical rights and privileges as against non-Magyar peoples, but solely in collaboration with them and co-operation in building up a powerful Hapsburg Empire, under whose protecting aegis they would have found complete freedom to develop their national characteristics. Their vanity prevented them from perceiving that for them independence spelt weakness.

If I call this national chauvinism and national intolerance the curse and doom of the Magyars, and the ultimate cause of the destruction not only of the Hapsburg Empire but of Hungary as well, and if, because I hold this view, any Magyar regards me as an enemy of the Hungarian nation, I would remind him that I share this view with a great Magyar, long since dead, Count Stephan Széchenyi, who addressed the following tragically prophetic words to Kossuth, the national Magyar hero: "Stir up every nation to madness against the Hungarian nation, throw firebrands into the farmer's house, scourge the interests of the whole nation into extreme antagonism, fill to the brim the cup of retaliation with your poison—and mark what will happen. But if one day, when it is too late, you come to see and feel that it was a curse and not a blessing that you called down on our heads, do not excuse yourself by saying that there was not in the nation one single patriot who possessed resolution enough to dissolve your delusive dreams into the nothingness they were."

My delicate position as the Emperor's chief private secretary for civil affairs made it impossible for me to defend myself against the accusations brought against me. Therefore in the end there was no way of escape from this unequal battle but retirement. The rest was silence. I regarded it as an obligation of honour to preserve this silence, except for corrections in matters of fact with regard to my retirement, so long as a connected account of my experiences and observations as the Emperor's secretary might cause any

political inconvenience. Also, I was aware that, with regard to Hungary, my views were partly opposed to those that the Emperor Karl held at the time. I could not help fearing that my political ideas might lead to erroneous conclusions about the Emperor's views instead of being taken entirely as my personal opinions. The decisive circumstance, namely, that I retired from my post as private secretary on account of this very difference of opinion, might very easily have been overlooked. Nor was it possible at the time to ignore the fact that an unvarnished account of Hungarian policy might very easily have interfered with the carrying out of plans on which many people confidently based all their hopes of a turn for the better.

To-day, however, the conditions and events of the last years of the Monarchy lie in the past. They belong to history. Therefore, I now consider myself released from the obligation of keeping silence and free to publish my notes. In view of the very slight influence I was in a position to exercise on the course of events, I assuredly do not ascribe to them any greater importance than they actually possess. They may, however, form a not wholly unimportant contribution to the history of the break-up of the old Hapsburg Empire.

ARTHUR POLZER-HODITZ.

BADEN, NEAR VIENNA,  
*October, 1928.*

# THE EMPEROR KARL

## CHAPTER I

### AUSTRIA-HUNGARY AND ITS MORTAL DISEASE

#### I

THE view is commonly held that the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was already ripe for destruction when it entered the War. It seems as if history supported this view; nevertheless, if the Monarchy were really ripe for destruction, this was certainly not due to any inner necessity; it was not because a State composed of heterogeneous nationalities cannot permanently survive, but was caused solely by obstacles in the way of the solution of national and constitutional problems. These obstacles—I will at the outset confine myself to domestic political conditions and not touch on foreign relations—arose as the result of erroneous political conceptions. Because these were put forward as a matter of course as the only right conceptions, they became apparent truths. To combat them would have been regarded as political illiteracy.

The dualistic form of government, the fiction of the national state of Hungary, a constitution on the model of the national unified states of the West, all these, the pillars on which the policy of those in authority rested, were not in harmony with the essential character of the Monarchy, which by origin and ethnical composition required quite different guiding principles.

The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy sprang from the personal power of the Hapsburgs, the princely race which for many centuries wore the crown of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation. The old Germanic Empire originated by natural necessity from the ethnical chaos which the great migrations brought upon Europe. It was instituted by the genius of nature. It was a structure such as the human mind would never have been able to erect. In addition to the German, it included peoples of varying races,

Slavs and Latins, in a loose confederation under the supreme authority of an Emperor of the German princely house. A federally united Empire without national exclusiveness, without centralizing or Germanizing aspirations, motley and variegated in its constitutional organization, in its economic and judicial life, in speech and dialect, manners and customs, diffusing the German spirit and the German culture without enforcing them, and, in spite of its lack of internal homogeneity, fully conscious of its community, its greatness and importance—such was the German Empire as nature willed it; Central Europe not yet stabilized, still heaving and fermenting. This Empire never came to maturity because its development was interfered with. To enumerate all the factors which interfered with and finally checked this development would take too long. I shall mention only the more important. Chief of all was the Reformation and the religious wars connected with it, which left a permanent cleavage among the Christian nations of Central Europe. The German Empire emerged from them in a state of impotence. A second factor which checked the natural development of Central Europe was the incursion of the great French usurper, the Napoleonic episode, which finally, by the formation of the Confederation of the Rhine, formally put an end to the old Germanic Empire. Nevertheless, under the leadership of the great Austrian statesman, Metternich, Central Europe celebrated its resurrection in the German Confederation. The third disturbing factor was the victory of the "little German" solution, that is, the creation of a narrow German Federation of States, excluding Austria, under Prussian hegemony, over the programme of the "greater Germans," who would have included Austria and maintained her at the head of Germany. The year 1866 saw the final partition of Central Europe into two great powers, but this meant also the abandonment of the federalist principle and the super-national tradition of the Hapsburgs. For the old German Empire, which, by its federalist structure, its wide projection into areas in which Germans were not cut off, but lived in community with nations speaking other languages, by its super-national character and consequent capacity for absorbing the Balkans and the Slavs

breaking in from the East, was the one and only means of building up a strong Central Europe, was replaced by a new German Empire, an exclusively national, Prusso-German State, organized on military lines, which, although it had a Federal constitution, was none the less only a State in which the Federal princes, outshone by the splendour of the King of Prussia, degenerated into mere shadow figures. The new German Empire closed itself against the outer world within its narrow self-chosen frontiers by means of the protective tariff. Not improperly, it relied on its own strength and vigour. It was by the Prussian method of exclusion and inclusion, the protective tariff, the model organization of trade and capital, that it became great and powerful. That is beyond all doubt. But this very method was at the same time the ultimate cause of the collapse of the Empire. The rapid and sudden economic rise of Germany, which went hand in hand with the building up of a magnificent army and a fleet that commanded respect, gave rise to alarm. Envy and malice assailed it. The superiority of the German people, real in many spheres, but in many others merely imaginary, was accepted with an ill grace; the harsh, self-conscious character of the Prussians,<sup>1</sup> which even their own race found hard to tolerate, completed the work, and Germany found herself hated by practically the whole of the rest of the world. To this should be added the fact that in those parts of Germany, not in themselves considerable, which were not en-

<sup>1</sup> The East Prussians are largely of Baltic, that is, Slav origin. The Baltic linguistic stock (Lithuanians, Letts, and Prussians), together with the Slavs, form one of the branches of the Indo-Germanic family. It was with the settlement of the country by the German Order that German blood first came into the original Slav population. The family names ending in "ov" and "itz" which are of such frequent occurrence in East Prussia, point to a Slav origin. Moreover, Prussia, that is the old Duchy, did not belong to the old German Empire until its union with Brandenburg (1618). The Elector Friedrich Wilhelm began to form a centralized state out of his lands, and when Prussia, in 1701, was raised to the status of a Kingdom, the name "Kingdom of Prussia" was applied to the total possessions of the Elector of Brandenburg. Not until then was the incorporation of the real, but non-Brandenburg Prussians in the German Empire realized. It is strange that it was the Prussians, the least purely Germanic race, that not only rose to be the leaders of the Germans but also displayed most decidedly German racial consciousness. As the founder of the new German Empire, this leading rôle fell to them as the result of historical development.



tirely populated by Germans, Prussian statesmanship was a complete failure. While Prussia was unable to arouse undivided sympathy for her leadership even among the population of South Germany, her methods were a glaring failure with the French population of Alsace-Lorraine in the West and with the Poles in the East. The new German Empire, during the whole period of nearly fifty years in which Alsace-Lorraine belonged to it, never contrived to arouse a cordial and permanent attachment in its population, in so far as it was French. It persisted in a state of more or less outspoken irredentism. And the efforts to Germanize the Poles were equally unsuccessful. This was inevitable, for no self-respecting people will allow itself to be deprived of its language, its racial characteristics and its feeling of racial unity, and be forced to become part of an alien national State. Ask the Germans in Czechoslovakia. Nay, even the Slovaks refuse to accept the national dictates of the Czechs, with whom they are racially akin. To-day nations will no longer consent to be governed by force alone. The application of principles belonging to a bygone age seems to-day to be the privilege only of people's republics or of monarchies in which demagogues have seized the power. To hereditary princes such courses are forbidden. The Alsatians and the Poles would assuredly have been satisfied under a super-national confederation of States, such as was the old German Empire. But satisfaction was impossible for them in an exclusively national federal State.

The strait jacket of a national State is unfitted, in view of the all-embracing power of the State, to unite in itself peoples of different race. That calls for the far-flung protecting mantle of an Empire, which at once guarantees and protects national freedom and autonomy.

Side by side with the new Prusso-German Empire, but excluded from its former community with the German States, stood Austria, united with Hungary, the old dominion of the Hapsburgs, the second great power of Central Europe. In it was preserved the last remnant of what was an essential attribute of the old German Empire, the super-national,<sup>1</sup> federal-

<sup>1</sup> "Super-national" is quite different from "international," in fact, the two concepts are mutually exclusive. Super-nationalism values and protects

istic principle. In it was incorporated the Imperial idea, the tradition of the Hapsburgs. In sharp contrast to this was the centralistic principle. In it was incorporated the national State idea, the method of the Hohenzollerns. The federalistic principle, in wise reliance on nature, takes account of the differences in national characters, and demands the free play of national forces, and individual national development. It is in harmony with the spirit and will of nature, which cannot be opposed with enduring success, and whose iron laws ultimately reimpose themselves with elemental force. The centralistic principle, on the other hand, subjects the nations to the will of a central authority, without regard to their individual differences; a mechanical regime is its only standard. But this is not a regime of which nature approves. It therefore needs military force to maintain it. Nevertheless, when successfully imposed by compulsion, it encounters opposition, and is bound with mathematical certainty to lead to catastrophe. A nation loses its political instinct under the application of this method, because it is unable to develop freely.

The struggle for supremacy in Germany, which began with Friedrich II and was decided against the House of Austria at the battle of Königgrätz, was not only a struggle between the Catholic Hapsburgs and the Protestant Hohenzollerns, not only a struggle for supremacy between two dynasties, but, in core and essence, a struggle between two irreconcilable opposites, the super-national, federalistic Imperial idea of the Hapsburgs, and the national, centralistic State idea of the Hohenzollerns, opposites that could not be

every individual characteristic, and desires that these should be protected and preserved in all nations. Internationalism, on the other hand, sets itself above national characteristics and tries to abolish them. Super-nationalism interdicts all levelling tendencies both in the national and the international sense. A nation will preserve its characteristics and its speech unchallenged if it grants to other nations the respect which it itself demands, and has the same regard for their national rights that it desires should be accorded to its own. Internationalism is a uniform delusive veneer spread over a monotonous civilization, a pseudo-culture, which is the creation of international Capital, but it is, at the same time, the drab grey distemper of the communist proletariat. Super-nationalism, on the contrary, is differentness, deliberate national individualism—deliberate, because true culture can only be rooted in the people and their special character.

reconciled either by a treaty of peace or a treaty of alliance. And although the alliance of Austria with the Germans was sincere, the alliance with Prussia, which had superseded Austria in her historic rôle, was not, and never could have been, sincere.

## II

While the federalistic, super-national principle may be styled the tradition of the Hapsburgs, that does not mean that aspirations towards centralization did not make themselves felt even in the Austrian dominions. These aspirations are well known. The Austrian collective State idea also has its history. But the measures and tendencies of this kind exemplified in Austria are very different from centralization in the real sense. The rights of the provincial Diets in the various kingdoms and lands that accrued to the Hapsburgs enjoyed the fullest consideration, and they preserved their autonomous rights up to the very last days of the Monarchy; Hungary, which also belonged to the Hapsburg dominions, even had its own constitutional law. Since, however, the Crown was a common central organ within the area of the Hapsburg dominions, the administration of the rights of the Crown was naturally of a centralized character. The history of the collective State idea is thus nothing else than the history, on the one hand, of the protection and consolidation of the rights of the Crown as against the provincial Diets, and, on the other hand, the history of the endeavours of the dynasty to unite the States as far as possible under one hand and to maintain them indivisible. The Pragmatic Sanction may be styled the crown of these endeavours.

The difficulties in the way of the policy of the Hapsburgs increased in proportion as the modern State idea superseded the Imperial idea. There is a touch of tragedy in the thought that it was the last representative of the maleline of Hapsburg, the great Empress Maria Theresa, who, in spite of all her splendid qualities and virtues, failed to recognize the nature of her power, and unwittingly implanted the germ of dualistic government, and thereby, of the mortal disease of the Hapsburg Empire. She had lost Silesia, one of her fairest

lands, to her great enemy, Friedrich II. She saw how he calmly set aside all the guaranteed rights of the Silesian Diet, and arbitrarily introduced Prussian law in Silesia. She saw the rise of the Prussian State by means of drastic militarism and centralization, and, in her resentment against a world of enemies and her hatred for the greatest of them, she tried to rival him. She applied the Prussian method to a part of her hereditary dominions by abolishing the Bohemian and Austrian Chanceries, founding in their place, in the year 1749, the *Directorium in publicis et cameralibus*, and taking the administration of justice, which had previously been the province of the Chanceries, away from them, and creating a High Court of Justice common to Bohemia and Austria.

These two departments, common to the States of Bohemia and Austria, were the forerunners of the Austrian Ministries. Maria Theresa did not dare to include Hungary in this centralization, for the Hungarian Estates had been legally superior to those of Bohemia since 1627. She permitted the Hungarian Chancery to continue, and by this apparently insignificant administrative act, by which she applied Prussian centralizing methods to part of her hereditary dominions, she shifted the already uneven balance between the constitutional rights of the Bohemian and Hungarian States decidedly to the detriment of the former. In this way she disturbed the equilibrium of her realm, and created a dualistic constitutional structure, by which the Hapsburg Empire lost its capacity for permanent survival.<sup>1</sup>

The period that followed was one of perpetual vacillation between the establishment of—or, more correctly, the return to—a federalistic system and centralization. The Crown, retaining the methods of Maria Theresa, decided for the former course, so far as Hungary was concerned, and for centralization for the rest of the Reich. That is to say, Hungary retained its constitutional rights in accordance with the federative principle, while in Austria an anational State federalism continued to exist and the other nationalities were centrally governed from Vienna. Naturally, the recognition of the historical Hungarian constitution encouraged Czech aspirations for the recognition of their constitutional rights also;

<sup>1</sup> On this question see *Das böhmische Staatsrecht*, by Dr. Karel Kramarz.

for Hungary and Bohemia had been independent kingdoms up to the year 1526, when they became part of the Hapsburg dominions. Although these originally equal historical foundations were, as already stated, afterwards altered, the memory that Bohemia, like Hungary, had been an independent State, survived, and continued to be nourished by the progressive development of Hungarian State rights. The Bohemian feudal lords looked on enviously at the great political part which the Magnates<sup>1</sup> contrived to play in Hungary with the remnants of the rights of their Estates, and they aimed at attaining to a similar position. To this was added the deepening of the national aspirations of the people, which in Hungary under the Magyars could, as it were, lawfully live on by the power of their hegemony, whereas, in Austria, they encountered the opposition of the Germans. And however right and natural might be the opposition which the Germans, in defence of their rights and ownership, made to Slav and, more particularly, Czech aspirations, these aspirations were equally right and natural in view of the example of Hungary. The mistake lay in the constitutional structure of the Monarchy. The partiality shown in the recognition of Hungarian constitutional rights in dualism was the physical defect from which the Monarchy had suffered since 1867, or, rather, from 1749, and which was the cause of its final ruin.

There were only two ways of bringing the Monarchy into equilibrium and saving it from internal disruption, the extension of the federative system to the whole Monarchy<sup>2</sup> or the abolition of Hungarian constitutional rights and the organization of the whole Monarchy in accordance with the principle of national rights within the framework of an Empire. The structural organization according to Crown lands had its historical basis in the gradual accession of the various States to the Hapsburg dominions. But time had altered the political thought and the political aspirations of the nations. The division by States was based on historical territorial rights which had lost all force and meaning. The various lands were

<sup>1</sup> The "Table of Magnates," the Hungarian Upper House.

<sup>2</sup> Even Ludwig Kossuth took the view that Hungarian constitutional independence could be permanently assured only if the same independence were granted to Bohemia.

little self-contained States whose frontiers had been drawn by history. As Austrian and Bohemian lands, too, they had been and remained holders of individual constitutional rights. Their frontiers continued to exist, although within a centrally governed State this had neither national nor economic justification. Up to the year 1848, this state of things may have been feasible, since up to that date, so far as Austria was concerned at least, national aspirations had no decisive force in politics. On the day, however, when these aspirations became practical politics, a correct evaluation of the new political factor germinating in nationalism and shrewd foresight should have shown that national political forces alone would ultimately determine the future configuration of the polyglot Monarchy. Statesmen should have begun with the gradual abolition of historical State rights and the building up of national rights. The Bill of the Kremsier Parliament was the most promising proposal in this direction. Unfortunately this Bill, which contained the germ of a sound method for building up the State on the basis of national rights, never became law. A natural process of development was stifled in embryo. The consequences were not slow to follow. The last decades of political life, or, rather, of national feuds, in Austria proved how useless it is to work against and try to check a natural development.<sup>1</sup> Out of this shirking of the fundamental solution of the one great Austrian question, which culminated in the problem of what forms of political life were best adapted to hold together all the politically and economically interdependent nations of the Monarchy, developed all the many lesser questions which could not be answered individually and singly, and started the see-saw policy which relied now on this and now on that element in the State, and finally abandoned the Monarchy to a process of disintegration. The authorities could never make up their minds to make a fundamental attack on the Austrian problem and to try to discover forms of political life which were in harmony with the essential nature of the Monarchy, and would have made it possible for the nationalities to live along-

<sup>1</sup> This does not mean that I am in favour of nationalism. On the contrary. Nothing encourages a movement so much as opposition; nothing weakens it so much as the elimination of all opposition.

side of and with each other. In order to rid the peoples living in the Monarchy of the poison of national jingoism, special consideration should have been paid to the national factor, and this consideration would have had to permeate the whole of the constitution and administration.

The leading politicians in Hungary energetically opposed both the return of the Monarchy to a federalistic basis and the organization of the united Monarchy on the principle of national rights within the framework of an Empire. In fact, their fear of the possibility of a turn in the situation in the direction of the imperial idea was so great that they demanded from every statesman taking up a responsible position a solemn confession of faith in the dogma of dualism. This confession of faith had to be repeated whenever the political situation of the moment gave rise to any suspicion of unorthodoxy. Anyone who believed in the imperial solution was regarded as a "dangerous madman."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In this connection, a speech made by Count Tisza in the Hungarian Parliament at the beginning of 1916, in answer to an apparently pre-arranged interpellation by Deputy von Rákovszky is noteworthy. He said:

"The honourable member has, I think, misinterpreted that part of my New Year's speech both of this year and last which referred to certain Austrian tendencies [the greater Austrian imperial idea is meant], and is in consequence rather at fault. In my last year's speech, if my memory does not deceive me, I made use of the expression that the war has taught us that it would be a madness dangerous to the community to give further support to tendencies of this kind. In this year's speech I looked at the matter from a higher historical standpoint, and added that my reference to these manifestations which had in the past proved an obstacle to mutual understanding was not intended as a recrimination, but was merely the expression of a wish to avoid the danger in time. It is quite wrong to suppose that I intended any sabre-rattling against movements which I regarded as a public danger. No one who does not wish to pursue an ostrich-like policy can fail to be aware that such trends existed and still exist in Austria. When the Hungarian nation made the Compromise with its King, and brought into being the present dualistic structure of the Monarchy, this movement was supported in Austria almost without exception by the circles which cherished to an extreme degree an active feeling for that Austrian patriotism, for the claims and vital necessities of that Austrian State, to which I too attach so much importance, and with which I, from the Hungarian point of view, desire to co-operate in union and understanding. It was not until many decades had elapsed that it was possible to chronicle a development which pushed this movement into the background and reduced its strength and intensity. The tendency which we must unite to oppose does exist, but I do not regard it as a danger to the Hungarian

The first advance<sup>1</sup> towards the federalization of the Monarchy made by a Government, which was taken under Hohenwart, was frustrated by the opposition of the Germans and Magyars: they were unwilling to grant Bohemia what they themselves possessed, although, before 1526, Bohemia had had the same historic rights. On this occasion the Jugoslavs supported the Czechs. It was the same political grouping as that which immediately preceded the fall of the Monarchy. The crisis had been latent since 1867, and, although the Emperor Franz Joseph in the first years of his reign, following the tradition of his House, paid homage to the imperial idea, and gave repeated expression to it, his rule, from the day on which he bound himself by the Hungarian coronation oath, was nothing more than the semblance of a rule. The sceptre which should have equally protected the rights of all

nation. I do regard it as a harmful phenomenon, chiefly to the interests of Austria, but ultimately it is harmful because it unites many valuable forces and may cause much sterile friction, but, I repeat, I do not regard it as a danger. And so long as we ourselves pursue the national policy on the main lines of which we are all, without distinction of party, agreed, so long as Hungarian national policy does not waver and stray away from this strong, sound, immovable base, neither these sporadic Austrian tendencies nor even more powerful antagonists can touch the Hungarian nation."

In these words Count Tisza may well have been thinking of his most powerful "antagonist," that greater Austrian, and therefore "dangerous madman," the late Archduke Franz Ferdinand.

Deák spoke in quite a different sense: "The Minister who directs the common affairs of all the lands of His Majesty is, in fact, a Minister of the Empire. The common Minister for Foreign Affairs, whose function, within the meaning of § 8 of Act XII of 1867, is to represent the Empire diplomatically and commercially, is, in fact, an Imperial Minister."

In Act II of 1848 mention of a Reich occurs, an expression which was regarded as highly treasonable by Tisza and all Hungarian politicians of the newer school.

The imperial idea was incompatible with the interests of the Magyar oligarchs, and is so in a certain sense even to-day; hence, in spite of the destruction of the Reich, the ever repeated demand that the Pragmatic Sanction should be regarded as abolished, and Hungary be an independent State. Fear of the "Reich" still exists; it is the murderers' shrinking from the corpse of the man they have murdered. The provisions of the Pragmatic Sanction relating to the indivisible and indissoluble possession of the Hungarian and other hereditary lands, and those of Act XII of 1867, are to-day, after the declaration of the Emperor Karl, made at the Villa Prangins on 8th November, 1920, to be regarded as repealed even from the legitimist standpoint.



the peoples of the Empire, had slipped from his hands into those of the Magyars.<sup>1</sup> Their predominance was all the more secure because they, relying on the dualistic structure of the State, were zealously supported by the Germans in Austria as a bulwark against Czech and Yugoslav aspirations after independence. The Germans had lost to Hungarian rule two and a half million German settlers in Hungary, and, therefore, they tried, by adherence to the dualistic structure, to find protection against the danger of being supplanted by the Slavs in Austria. The usual account which represents the Compromise as having given the Magyars the predominance in the Eastern half of the Empire and the Germans the predominance in the Western half is incorrect; for, while it is true that the Magyars exercised unlimited authority over all the nationalities in Hungary, up to the outbreak of the World War—after that the position altered—there was no question of German predominance in Austria. The Germans fought for ascendancy in the kingdoms and lands represented in the Reichsrat, but they did not succeed in more than barely maintaining their position. The fact that the German language, not *de jure*, but *de consuetudine*, was to a certain extent the official language in Austria, must not be interpreted as a sign of supremacy. A custom had been maintained for pur-

<sup>1</sup> See the Imperial Patent of 2nd December, 1848: "... on the basis of equal rights for all the nations of the Empire... the Fatherland will arise anew... an ample dwelling for the races of different tongues, whom a fraternal tie has united for centuries under the sceptre of our fathers.... We expect to succeed in uniting all the lands and races of the Monarchy in one great body politic."

The Imperial Manifesto of 4th March, 1849, says: "A constitution which... shall embrace the whole Empire in common union, that is what the nations of Austria, with justifiable impatience, look for from us."

The Imperial Patent of 7th April 1850, (relating to the regulation of relations with Croatia) says: "The most important of those decisions relate... to the principles of Austrian unity and the equal rights of all the nationalities. Within the meaning of these principles which form the corner-stones of Our Empire,..."

His Majesty's Cabinet circular of 20th August, 1851: "... In discussing this question as well as in all subsequent negotiations, the principle and the aim of maintaining every condition of the monarchical form and the political unity of My Empire is to be kept immovably in mind and regarded as the one firm foundation of all our work."

poses of convenience.<sup>1</sup> The Germans,<sup>1</sup> however, overlooked one thing, namely, that from the recognition of the historical constitutional rights of Hungary stabilized in dualism, that is, from the Hungarian example, a permanent danger, inherent in the dualistic political structure, threatened them. They should have realized this at the time of the federalistic campaign undertaken by Hohenwart. The Germans in Austria stood then at a decisive turning of the ways. The contents of a letter written to Count Herbert Bismarck at that time by the Upper Austrian Deputy Friedrich, Freiherr zu Weichs,<sup>2</sup> is typical of the political thought of the Germans in Austria at that period. In it Freiherr zu Weichs says: "The Hohenwart Ministry is pursuing a policy which will definitely oust the German element from leadership in Western Austria—the necessary condition of the Hungarian Compromise—and substitute the leadership of the Slavs for that of the Germans. After his dissolution of the Reichsrat, the last bond still uniting the Germans in Austria, Hohenwart will burst every tie between them asunder, and by granting the Czech and Polish demands will create a state of things which will inevitably drive the Germans into opposition to the Austrian political idea, whereas it is clear, as I have already said, that the preservation of an Austria under German-Magyar leadership, an Austria under the influence of German politicians, is at the moment in the interests of the German Empire."

Comprehensible as was this way of thinking among the Austrian Germans, quite incomprehensible was their failure to realize that it was an anachronism, and that if it were convenient in their own interest and in that of the German Empire to preserve the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, only one way was open to them, to come to an understanding with the Slavs. This would have changed the balance of power at one stroke. Austria would have become the more powerful part. She would have found the strongest support in the other nationalities in Hungary in the political struggle against, not

<sup>1</sup> That is, the German Liberals and the German Nationalists, since, as is well known, the Christian Socialists and the German Social Democrats were the opponents of dualism and believed in the imperial idea. This qualification applies to all the statements which follow.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in *Graf Julius Andrássy, sein Leben und seine Zeit*, by Eduard von Wertheimer, vol. i, page 562.

the Magyars, but the Magyar claims to domination. This course would have checked many of the things which shook the foundations of the Monarchy. The policy of Hungary towards Serbia and Rumania, which was so fatal to herself, would have taken quite a different course; the Southern Slav question, the vital question for the Monarchy, would have become less difficult and might even have found its ultimate solution, and the Magyar aspirations after independence would not have been able to threaten the unified State. That an understanding between Germans and Slavs was possible is proved by the fact that the mediation proposals of Palacky and Rieger, which were harshly rejected by the Germans, were almost identical with the demands made by the Germans in the last decades of the Monarchy.

But there was one indispensable condition for such an understanding, and that was renunciation of dualism. This important fact was overlooked by the politicians. The failure to recognize it wrecked the efforts to reach agreement made by all the Governments of the Emperor Franz Joseph, and ultimately by those of the Emperor Karl.

Nor had there been any lack of voices from the Slav camp in the years preceding the introduction of dualism raised in urgent warning against that form of government. In the year 1865, there appeared in the *Narod* a series of articles entitled "Idea statu Rakouského," in which Palacky showed with convincing force and logic that the dualistic form of government was incompatible with the Austrian idea, and foretold with prophetic gift the evils that dualism would cause. "The day on which dualism is proclaimed," wrote Palacky in 1865, "will by irresistible natural necessity also prove to be the birthday of Panslavism in its least desirable form; the fathers of dualism will be its sponsors. We Slavs will face it with justifiable sorrow but without fear. We were there before Austria; we will be there after she has gone. . . . I have only tried to do my duty as far as I could, so that my conscience may not reproach me for not having given warning, before it was too late, of dangers which perhaps nobody else is able to foresee in the same way and with the same certainty as I can." Moreover, the Czech declaration in the Bohemian and Moravian Diet in the year 1868, which protested passionately

against dualism, left no doubt that the introduction of this form of government had dealt the Slavs a wound which would not heal and which would make all understanding impossible. Ever since that time the Slav opposition to dualism had run like a red thread through the history of all national attempts at compromise. The battle against the constitutional basis of the Monarchy created by dualism was no longer, it is true, carried on so openly by the Slavs after the overthrow of Hohenwart, because they realized that the struggle had become hopeless. But their national demands became more intense in proportion as Hungarian State rights developed under the protection of dualism, and the Germans aided this development by their repeated declarations in favour of dualism. Finally it went so far that the radicals among the Czechs—and in all national questions it is always the radical school that has to be reckoned with—aimed at more than constitutional rights for Bohemia; their aim was a Czech dominion such as the Magyars exercised in Hungary. They were no longer concerned about equal rights; they wanted predominance, sovereignty over other nationalities, the oppression of their enemies, the Germans and Magyars. A policy of striving after national agreement was replaced by a policy of hate, revenge, and retaliation, which ultimately found its incompatible expression in the “imperium” of the “Czechoslovak National Republic.”

### III

To-day, after the downfall of the Monarchy, we can see plainly what havoc the Germans in Austria wrought for themselves by their policy of stubborn adhesion to dualism and stubborn resistance to a reform of the Monarchy on the lines of full and equal rights for all.

Through their alliance with the Magyars as the guardians of their own constitutional rights, the Germans in Austria were condemned to play an impotent part, for they had the Slavs as their open enemies without having won over the Magyars to support their interests. By a change of front

towards separate constitutional law for Hungary, against the dualistic form of government, towards imperial unity, they would have found the strongest support among the Slavs and all the other non-Magyar nations of the Monarchy.

Austrian statesmen cannot be reproached for not having found the key to the solution of the nationality question in Hungary, and it would be a great mistake to ascribe this failure to a lack of statesmanlike gifts in Austrian politicians and officials. On the contrary, statesmanship was never lacking in Austria. The difficulties with which Austrian politicians and officials, even those in subordinate positions, had to contend, were due entirely to the political history of the States. To the difficult conditions through which they had to plough their way is to be ascribed the fact that Austria had at her disposal a wealth of men of marked political capacity. It would be most unjust to refuse to recognize the great services of Austrian statesmen to the nationality problems, merely because ultimate success was denied them. It was thanks to their outstanding achievements in this very difficult sphere that the old Austria could be regarded as the model of a State in which all the nations, so far as the constitutional structure permitted, enjoyed protection of their national rights. Professor A. Sardo y Vilar was right when he maintained (in his *Revista de Austria-Hungria*<sup>1</sup>) that "with the exception of Switzerland, Austria is the only State in Europe which upholds the principle of nationality for all its subjects." The Spanish publicist apostrophizes the English and exhorts them to give Ireland Home Rule, declare Irish to be the official language, and treat the Irish in the same way as other British subjects, open universities and schools in which the Irish could be taught in the language they heard from their mothers' lips, so that at one stroke they might raise themselves to the Austrian level. He apostrophizes the French and exhorts them not to compel their Flemish, Breton, Basque, Catalanian and Italian subjects to be educated in a language which is not their own, but to grant autonomy to them all; then they would rise to the level of Austria. He apostrophizes the Russians and exhorts them to respect the faith and the

<sup>1</sup> Translated from the Spanish by Heinrich von Schullern (*Neuösterreichische Blätter*, 1917. No. 3, pp. 40 et seq.).

language of the millions of Polish, Ukrainian and other subjects of Russia, and to imitate the example of Switzerland, whose attitude resembles that of Austria. "If you do not do this," Professor Sardo concludes his exhortation, "if you do not follow the example of Austria, and continue to content yourselves with fine sounding words without making any tangible concessions, you have no right to champion the principle of national rights for oppressed peoples, for if there are any oppressed, enslaved nations in Europe, these live and suffer in Russia, Britain and France, not in Austria, a State which, in the matter of freedom, civilization and humanity, stands far above the accusations, lies, and slanders of malicious political scribblers."

Such was the verdict of a foreigner on national conditions in the old Austria. And his verdict is correct. For it is an undeniable fact that in no State in the world, except Switzerland, did the nationalities enjoy such a high degree of protection and consideration of their interests as in Austria. Since, however, in spite of this, the national feud could not be appeased, it is an obvious question to ask whether the system applied in England, France, and Russia would not have been the better one. That was the opinion of Tisza and of almost all Hungarian politicians of the more modern school. And yet, this question must be answered by a most decided negative. Austria was compelled to give the fullest consideration to the national rights of her peoples. The difference between national relations in Austria and those prevailing in England, France, and Russia lay in the fact that, in the latter countries, it was more or less a matter of linguistic problems within the same race, whereas Austria had to solve the problem of amicable agreement between different races living together and alongside each other. Hungary was in the same position as Austria: Hungary, like Austria, was inhabited by peoples of different race, but had applied a system of centralized national States. That destroyed Hungary.

Although the rights of nationalities had reached a far higher point of development in Austria than in other States, the national-political organization was far from complete. For its further development Austrian statesmen, scholars, and politicians had worked out proposals which, based as they are

on the principles of national autonomy are of outstanding importance. From the wealth of proposals and drafts on this subject, I shall mention only the drafts worked out in the Department for the Revision of the Constitution belonging to the Imperial and Royal Prime Minister's office under the guidance of Professor Freiherr von Hold. Technically, the problem was solved; politically, it seemed insoluble. And yet this was not so. Austrian statesmen were unable to find the key to the final solution of the nationality question, solely because the key lay not in Austria but in Hungary, and they were debarred from any "interference" in Hungarian affairs.

Hungary had once been a hospitable home for all the nations inhabiting it. The formula of Saint Stephen, "*Unius linguae uniusque moris regnum imbecile et fragile est*," had long preserved its magic power. On this principle of the greatest statesman that Hungary ever possessed the vitality of Hungary as a political organism depended. The hospitality shown by the Magyars especially to the many Germans domiciled there by the shrewd Arpads had not been to their disadvantage. The Germans built towns for them, laid the foundations of commerce and industry, instructed the wild horse-riding and nomad people in agriculture and viticulture, taught them useful handicrafts and how to make barren land cultivable, unlocked the treasures of their mines and brought them the blessings and spiritual wealth of German civilization. And like the Germans, all the other races living in Hungary retained their national characteristics undisturbed. The Magyars remained Magyar, the Germans, German, the Slavs, Slav. This state of national toleration, or, rather, national indifference, was the same in other States and countries. It was not until the national emancipation movement about the middle of the nineteenth century, that in Hungary, as everywhere else, a remarkable reaction set in. By Act XI of 1836 the Hungarian language became the language of legislation. Up till then it had been Latin. It is a remarkable fact that at that time the high nobility and the landed gentry also to a large extent did not know the Magyar language, which took almost the least important place among the languages in Hungary. This first Linguistic Act was followed in 1839 and 1843 by further Acts which gave the Hungarian language ever-in-

creasing currency. Nevertheless, Act VI of 1840, which declared Magyar to be the compulsory official and ecclesiastical language all over Hungary, proved quite impracticable, for in the non-Magyar districts the Hungarian language was not understood or spoken by anybody, not even the clergy and the officials, and there was no possibility of their mastering it. However natural and comprehensible might be the attempt of the Hungarian Diet to give the mother tongue universal currency as the official language for practical as well as national reasons, nevertheless the methods with which, even in these first beginnings of linguistic legislation, they went to work by ordering the immediate use in official business and in the churches of a foreign language unknown to the great majority of the population of Hungary, showed very little statesman-like ability on the part of the legislators. The Act of the year 1840 and, still more, a similar Act of 1844, by which the Magyar language was established as the language to be used in schools and universities throughout the country, caused the greatest agitation in all the non-Magyar districts, and at once roused and wounded the still dormant national susceptibilities of the peoples who spoke other languages. In Croatia, which was also affected by these Linguistic Acts, bitterness of feeling rose to open insurrection. Even then there was no lack of Hungarian statesmen to give warning against this senseless kind of magyarization. For example, Count Stephan Széchenyi said in a speech delivered to the Hungarian Academy on 27th November, 1842: "To-day it is not enough to enact laws; we must arouse sympathy for our laws; for excessive severity is futile, it creates martyrs and produces fanaticism."<sup>1</sup> But these and similar warnings of anxious patriots remained unheeded.

<sup>1</sup> In the same speech Count Széchenyi also touched on the Hungarian nationality and language in the following words: "While other nations let themselves be guided solely by the excellence of their cause, and trouble little whence and in what guise it comes, Hungary is determined to clothe everything, from the smallest to the greatest, in Magyar garb, and anything not wearing this garb is *ipso facto* suspicious. I at least scarcely know a real Hungarian who, no matter how white his hair may be or how deep his forehead be furrowed by experience and knowledge of life, does not, like a madman whose *idée fixe* has been challenged, immediately depart from the rules of fair play, even of justice, whenever the question of our language and nationality comes on the carpet. On such occasions the most cool-



It was the events of the year 1848 that first made the Hungarian statesmen realize that the methods they had been employing towards the non-Magyar peoples of Hungary were not adapted to ensure the prosperous development of the Hungarian commonwealth. This realization found expression in speeches made in the Lower House (1861 and 1866), and had a not inconsiderable influence on the Nationalities Act of 1868, which, if it had been administered in the spirit of its author, Franz Deák, would have protected the linguistic and cultural interests of the various peoples. But the Act was from the beginning interpreted in an arbitrary fashion, or, when this was insufficient, set aside altogether; finally the Government itself simply declared that it was impracticable. No one paid any more attention to this Act, by which Deák, the "nation's sage," had tried to protect the rights of all nationalities in the interest of his country. Only one provision of the Act became the common property of the Magyars, namely, the provision by which all the nations inhabiting Hungary were gathered up into an "indivisible unified Hungarian nation." But since a fact cannot be driven out of existence even by a Hungarian Act, that is to say, a State composed of various nationalities cannot be transformed into a national State, this provision can only be interpreted in the sense that the conception of a "nation" was substituted for the conception of "State citizenship," a change which Deák, knowing the vanity of his countrymen, made deliberately in the belief that it was merely a matter of an ineffective and, therefore, harmless ornament to the Act. But the Magyars interpreted the provision in their own way. They actually believed in the existence of a Hungarian national State, identifying "Hungarian" with "Magyar," and denying the equal rights of the "nations," on the grounds that the Act merely spoke of equal rights for those belonging to "the nation." To what an astounding distortion of national law this interpretation led is shown by a sentence perpetrated by Professor headed are carried away, the most keen-sighted are struck with blindness, the fairest and justest are ready to forget or actually do forget the first of the unalterable rules of eternal truth, which should not be lost sight of in any circumstances, the rule: 'Do not do unto others what you would not have others do unto you.' (See *Ungarische Lyriker von Alex. Küfaludy bis auf die neueste Zeit*, by Gustav Steinacker.)

von Ferdinandy in his work, *Staats- und Verwaltungsrecht des Königreichs Ungarn*.<sup>1</sup> "The official use of the language prevailing in Hungary was regulated from the standpoint of equality of rights for the citizens of the State, which takes no account of nationality." Thus, by means of a legal provision which had no real importance, and by self-deception, the fiction of a national State originated, from the alleged reality of which the Magyars derived the legal right to unlimited magyarization and unlimited domination over all the non-Magyar nations of Hungary. Out of a historical hegemony, they built up an absolute dominion, and substituted for the rôle of leader that of absolute monarch.

A reactionary electoral law secured them an almost complete mastery in Parliament; an equally reactionary administrative law assured their arbitrary rule in the Comitats.<sup>2</sup> Was it not quite natural that the Germans in Austria, seeing that two and a half million members of their race living in Hungary had been lost to the national cause by the Compromise of 1867, should strive for predominance in Austria equal to that exercised by the Magyars in Hungary? The meaning and aim of the dualistic form of Government was interpreted as being intended to give the Magyars the leading rôle in Trans-Leithania and the Germans the leading rôle in Cis-Leithania. They had the Hungarian example before their eyes. And was it not also natural for the Czechs, who were conscious of possessing the same historical rights as the Magyars, to strive for the establishment of a State in which they would be master as the Magyars were in Hungary? They, too, had the Hungarian example before their eyes. Nor were the Poles and the Croats backward with their demands. They, too, struggled for their historic rights. These rights had been conceded to Hungary, Hungary had been granted her own constitutional law. The others now tried to win it by defiance. Again and again it was the Hungarian example which gave fresh food to the mutually irreconcilable ambitions of the other nationalities.

The constitutional position in Hungary was not worth imitation. The independent States which the Czechs, the Poles

<sup>1</sup> *Bibliothek des Öffentlichen Rechtes*, vol. xvi, page 80.

<sup>2</sup> Hungarian county assemblies. (Translators' note.)

and the Croats were striving for would still have been merely States with a population speaking different languages, that is, States in which, as in Hungary, one nation ruled over other fragments of nations, and in which the national feuds would have continued to exist. Accordingly, the nationality question was not to be solved merely by territorial demarcation into federative States, but solely in conjunction with the creation of new forms of State life, which, being based on the principles of complete equality of rights and national autonomy, would guarantee the possibility of the nations living alongside of and with each other with the least possible friction under the common protection of an empire. The unfortunate dualistic form of government, the forcing house in the sultry atmosphere of which the national poison plants grew and flourished, must first of all have been destroyed, in order to leave the way open for a solution of the nationality problems.

It is in this sense that I wish to be understood when I express the opinion that the key to the solution of the nationality question lay not in Austria but in Hungary, and that the Austrian statesmen could not find it because any "interference" in Hungarian affairs was forbidden to them. The divorce between the domestic affairs of Hungary and those of Austria and the so-called "negotiation on a footing of equality" were obstacles in the way.

#### IV

That the Hungarian lords anxiously tried to prevent any insight into their domestic affairs, is only too easily understood; but that Austria should have assented to this state of things so unconditionally was a great mistake, the blame for which lies at the door of the responsible advisers of the Emperor Franz Joseph. The Monarchy might be divided into two parts by deed and seal, and the two halves be painted in quite different colours, but this was only the surface. In its real nature the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy remained what it had always been, a unified organism, a great State composed of different nations under one ruling House, with one great

mission, with the same interests, the various parts mutually supplementing each other in the economic sphere and each self-contained within its own borders. A unified organism like this demanded uniform treatment in all important political affairs. To apply conflicting principles in the different parts, on the motto, "You go left and let me go right," was bound to be extremely detrimental to the political organism. It was also true that every important measure taken in the one half immediately affected the other half also. If an emetic had been given to one of the Siamese twins, the other one would certainly have felt some ill-effects. Prohibition of interference by the one half in the internal affairs of the other was an absurdity, as the whole idea of dualism was an absurdity. But it was a convenient point of view and had the sanction of law. Austrian statesmen never dared to probe any political idea to the depths, because every such idea, in some of its implications, came up against the reactions it would cause in Hungary, and here the law stepped in and forbade any further progress.

The Emperor Franz Joseph, who marked off the sphere of influence of his various advisers with almost mathematical precision, and never discussed with one Minister any matter which came within the province of another, applied this strictly bureaucratic principle even more strongly to the internal affairs of the two halves of his Empire, without any regard for any possible inner connection. His Ministers used again and again to complain to me that it was quite impossible for them to make even incidental reference to Hungarian affairs. His Majesty immediately broke off the conversation, generally with the remark that for Hungarian affairs he had his Hungarian Ministers. So the ideas of Austrian statesmen were forced into a bed of Procrustes, and all their programmes, all their political measures and enterprises had to remain imperfect things. Success was denied to them; only ideas that could evolve with complete freedom could be successful, not ideas that had to stop short at the Leitha.<sup>1</sup>

No doubt the formally correct attitude of the Emperor was influenced by unpleasant memories of his former unsuccessful

<sup>1</sup> A tributary of the Danube, the boundary between Austria and Hungary. (Translators' note.)

attempts at reforming the Constitution, and by a feeling of satisfaction over the apparent solution of the constitutional problem which had at last been found in the Compromise of the year 1867. Franz Joseph's reluctance to undertake further constitutional experiments and the restraint imposed on him by the Hungarian coronation oath had a great, even a preponderant influence; for reform of the constitutional basis of the Monarchy would have been possible only by means of the abolition of the dualistic form of government and the solution of the Yugoslav question, which would have disturbed the integrity of the lands belonging to the Hungarian Crown. And another, very important fact exercised an obstructive, even a crippling effect on the solution of Austrian and Hungarian national political problems, I mean the fact already mentioned in my preface that Berlin was not only very ill-informed about our political conditions, but had formed quite erroneous opinions about them. This was a natural consequence of our having left the political enlightenment of political circles in Berlin almost entirely to the Magyars.<sup>1</sup> People in Berlin actually believed that dualism was the one form of government which would ensure the continued existence of the Monarchy, and guarantee the permanence of the German alliance.

Count Tisza might assert <sup>2</sup> that there was "no element in the Monarchy whose vital interests were so intertwined with those of the dynasty and the existence of the Monarchy as a Great Power as were Hungary's," but such an assertion could be nothing but a mere phrase, so long as the Magyars were shaking the Monarchy to its foundations at home by their aspirations after independence, their conduct towards the other nations and their Yugoslav policy, and took up an attitude towards Serbia and Rumania as stubborn as it was short-sighted, which gravely imperilled the Monarchy from without as well, and which in actual fact was its ruin. People in Austria were more or less conscious of all these things. But since they never tired of admiring as a great statesman Count

<sup>1</sup> For decades, as is well known, only gentlemen of Hungarian nationality had been accredited as Austro-Hungarian ambassadors to Berlin.

<sup>2</sup> Letter from Count Tisza to Count Czernin, dated 22nd February, 1917. (See Czernin's *Im Weltkrieg*, page 275. Verlag Ullstein, 1919.)

Tisza, the man responsible for this unfortunate policy, and never thought of breaking his ruinous influence, Berlin had no reason to distrust his policy or to realize that it was based on wrong principles. The whole country was under the spell of Tisza's undeniably strong personality, and saw the art of a statesman in what was merely the tricks of an astute politician. Tisza knew how to make his political ideas convincing; he was skilful in fighting for these ideas and throwing his personality into the scale. He was a hot-head who thought he could do the impossible and would brook no compromise, a bitter enemy of all who stood in his way, a trustworthy friend to all who supported him and did not think him dangerous. Personally he was irreproachable, but he was extremely tolerant of corruption and inefficiency. He would beyond doubt have been a statesman—he possessed all the qualities in high degree—if his ideas had been right. But they were wrong, and what was worst of all, they were incompatible not only with the interests of the Monarchy as a whole, but even with those of his own Hungary. It was a calamity that his power remained undiminished right up to the final catastrophe, that his influence remained unimpaired, that at the very time when a change of course against the desires of Count Tisza might still have brought considerable alleviation, there was installed in the Ballhausplatz Count Czernin, whose peculiarity it was never to draw the right conclusions from a correct appreciation of the facts and take strong action on those lines. Czernin repeatedly reproached Tisza with "digging your own grave and the graves of all the rest of us by your unfortunate backwoods patriotism," and recognized his policy as a "petty parish pump policy," and dualism as "one of our drawbacks in the War."<sup>1</sup> But he did nothing whatever to break the power of this dangerous "parish pump politician," nor to counteract his fatal policy.

With regard to the re-shaping of the Monarchy, in "responsible" circles the view was almost generally held that any reform was impossible during the War. A fatal error! Everything must be done decently and in order, forsooth! First the War, then the Treaty of Peace, and finally reform. This was the view held, greatly to our detriment, and so they

<sup>1</sup> Czernin, *Im Weltkrieg*, page 187.

did not see that there was not a moment to be lost, that not only the issue of the War, not only Trieste and the South Tyrol, but the very existence of the Monarchy was at stake. It was perfectly clear: the Hapsburg Empire must declare itself during the course of the War, or—perish.

In Berlin, as I have already said, it was thought that dualism and the anti-Slav policy it involved were the necessary conditions for the preservation of the Monarchy and for the German alliance. The exact opposite was the case. Dualism kept the Monarchy in a state of latent crisis, and, if the idea be pursued to its ultimate implications, threatened the German alliance, which would have been constitutionally impossible to maintain in the long run against the opposition of the Slav majority in the population. It could only have been preserved if the Slavs had been moved from their fundamental opposition and brought into more moderate paths by a policy which met them half-way. There was in any case a chance of bringing them back to the conciliatory ideas of the Czech statesman, Palacky, so much slandered by the Germans, who wrote in the year 1848: "There is nothing left but for both powers, Austria and Germany, to establish themselves side by side, with equal rights, to transform their former federation into a perpetual offensive and defensive alliance, and, if need be, if it is in consonance with their mutual interests, to conclude a customs agreement with each other."

My hope that the world upheaval would light the torch of genius was not realized. In spite of all the infallible signs, those "responsible" could not bring themselves to recognize that dualism was the obstacle to any understanding between the Germans and the Slavs, and that a clean sweep of it must be made—this was the *conditio sine qua non*, otherwise all attempts to reach understanding would be fruitless. And it would have been possible to make a clean sweep of dualism during the War after the accession of the new sovereign. But for that we needed the support of the Germans in the Empire. For them to declare themselves was a prime necessity. But we were not content to neglect this; with incomprehensible carelessness we left the influencing of Berlin to the Magyars, who performed this task in their own interests and for their own purposes so thoroughly that they found in the policy of

Berlin another powerful lever against the interests of the Monarchy as a whole.

I was, and still am, firmly convinced that a change in internal policy brought about by the removal of the obstacles in the way of an understanding between the nationalities would also have involved a decisive change in the external situation and policy of the Monarchy. I do not hesitate even at giving expression to my belief that an understanding between the Germans and Slavs in Austria would have been the germ of an understanding between the nations reaching far beyond the boundaries of the Monarchy.

But a change in internal policy was wrecked on the fact that the responsible statesmen had neglected to enlighten themselves about the real state of affairs in Hungary, the aims of the policy pursued by the Magyar leaders, and, above all, the real extent of the political power of the Magyars. Their power was almost universally greatly overestimated, as ignorance of Hungarian conditions was universal; even among Hungarian politicians, there were very few who, unmoved by the strong suggestive force of chauvinistic pretensions of power, saw things as they were and realized that the proud Hungarian edifice was in reality a house of cards, which was bound to collapse at the first assault. The Hungarian spokesmen persisted to the bitter end in their attitude of rejection towards a constitutional reorganization of the Danube Monarchy; even when the whole structure was already tottering, immediately before the final catastrophe, they compelled the insertion in the unfortunate Manifesto of a clause by which the integrity of the lands of the Hungarian Crown was guaranteed. That was the final abandonment of a solution of the Yugoslav question by which the Monarchy might have been saved.

The Emperor Karl was firmly convinced of the necessity of a reorganization of the Monarchy. But even when they did not actually oppose him, he found neither understanding nor support among his Ministers. And bound to the constitution as he was by the coronation oath, he would have been able to carry out the reforms which he recognized to be necessary only in agreement with the Hungarian Parliament. Hence his attempt to set the representation of the people on a new and broader basis by an amendment in the Electoral Law.



After the catastrophe, all the statesmen and politicians who had imposed their will against the better judgment of the Emperor and had stubbornly and successfully opposed all reorganization of the Monarchy could find no other attitude to save their reputation as statesmen than the cheap assertion that it would have been naïve to believe that a different political course might have prevented the Revolution. I doubt whether this opinion will be able to face the verdict of history.

## CHAPTER II

### MY RELATIONS WITH THE ARCHDUKE KARL FRANZ JOSEPH BEFORE HE BECAME EMPEROR

#### I

I HAD known the future Emperor Karl from his earliest youth. I saw and spoke to him for the first time at a dance for young people given by Prince Alfred Windischgraetz on 6th February, 1902, at his house in the Renngasse in Vienna. The Archduke Karl was then still quite a child, a friendly fair-haired boy with candid blue eyes. His boyhood's friends were contemporaries of his own belonging to the most distinguished noble families, among them, Count Hans Wilczek, Prince Ferdinand Montenuovo, Count Draskovich, and Count Erdödy. I got to know him better when we met in the spring of 1904 at the hydropathic at Brixen. The Archduke had come there with his tutor, Count Georg Wallis, who had been my friend for many years, to recover his health after an illness. I spent several hours every day in the company of the Archduke, then a boy of sixteen. We took walks according to medical orders, made excursions on foot and wheel in the surrounding districts, played tennis, hunted for antiquities in the villages around Brixen, and generally whiled away the month's "cure" in all the ways we could think of. I hurt my eyes through an accident, and the young Archduke came to see me several times a day to help to fleet the hours I had to spend in a darkened room. In spite of the nearly twenty years' difference in our ages, he was very fond of being with me. I took great pleasure in his sunny nature, his gay and frank temper, and the kindness which found a friendly word or act for everybody. For all his youthful *joie de vivre* he liked serious conversation. I was often amazed at the clear and straightforward judgments he expressed on men and things. His judgments were always charitable, never malicious. He showed great appreciation for natural beauty and loved the mountains. But sentimentality was alien to his

nature: he hated pose. He was absolutely genuine, sincere, and healthy-minded. It was the crown that first damped his spirit, as he bore the burden alone and faithfully. I was struck even at Brixen by his remarkable memory not only for people but for events. I remember one day in conversation with Count Wallis, I happened to speak of the circumstances under which Count Kálnoky resigned, and the Archduke proved to be perfectly informed on the political events of that time, and was in a position to teach us both.

During the summer of 1904 I was a guest at Reichenau nearly every Sunday. In the autumn, I was often invited to the Augarten and to Hetzendorf, where, in company with Count Wallis or Freiherr von Mattencloît, the Archduke's other tutor, and frequently also the Archduke Max and his tutor, Freiherr von Blumencron, we went for long tramps in the Wienerwald. In the spring of 1905 we met again at Brixen. It was at this time that he was invested with the Order of the Golden Fleece. He sent for me when he received the dispatch with the Imperial autograph letter and the rules of the Order. Together we undid the seals of the enormous envelope and plunged into the reading of the rules, which, as they were drawn up in old-French, were by no means easy to read. The young Archduke, however, was very thorough, and took it as a matter of course that he must not sign the oath to observe the rules until he was perfectly clear about the obligations he would thereby undertake. The study of the rules took several days. The Archduke remarked that certain of their provisions were completely out-of-date, and impossible to carry out with the best will in the world.

Next summer, as in spring, I was often at Hetzendorf and Reichenau several times a week, and regularly on Sundays and festivals. In the autumn I was invited for the first time to Miramar, where I spent ten days as the guest of the Archduchess Maria Josepha; Count Franz Ceschi, later the Master of the Household of the Archduke Max, was a fellow guest. We arrived on the 8th September, 1905, and found the Archduke Karl, in white hunting-dress, awaiting us in the court waiting-room at Miramar; he helped us to get our luggage, which had been registered to Trieste, out of the luggage van and drove us through the shady winding roads of the

park to the Schloss. We breakfasted on a terrace facing the sea. In the morning, we made an excursion by motor-boat to Sistiana. At 11 o'clock Mass was celebrated in the Castle Chapel; at 1 o'clock we dined. In the afternoon we drove to Trieste Harbour, climbed the lighthouse, had tea on board a motor-boat, and, after a ramble through the streets of Trieste, drove back to Miramar at sunset. Afterwards we had supper on the terrace by moonlight. Next day we went to the Brioni Islands. We had some interesting plan for every day.

When I recall the days I spent at Miramar that year and in the years that followed, I feel that I am looking back at a world of romance. The weather was always lovely when I was at Miramar. All the time a cloudless sky arched the Adriatic, whose deep blue waters reflected the dazzlingly white marble of the Schloss. Many objections may be brought against the building from the artistic standpoint, but its effect was that of a fairy-tale palace. In the marvellous park the southern effect was heightened by horticultural art. The whole huge garden was threaded by wide shaded walks overgrown with luxuriant flowering creepers, so that almost any part of it could be reached without coming out of the shade. The dark towering pines stood out against the dazzling white of the rocks and the house. Encircled with palms, pines, yews, cedars, laurels, and other evergreen trees and shrubs, the wide flower beds descending in terraces to the dark blue sea, lay bathed in sunlight, a sea of blossom, colour after colour, a scene of undreamt-of splendour. Life there, like its setting, was fair and gay. The Archduchess Maria Josepha was the kindest of hostesses. Although always preserving her dignity, she knew how to create and maintain an atmosphere of unrestrained gaiety. Owing to her wide but in no way superficial culture, her great interest in and understanding of art, every expedition to the coast, so rich in artistic monuments, and every conversation with this great lady was both stimulating and instructive. She is the worthy granddaughter and spiritual heir of King Johann of Saxony, who was well known as a Dante scholar and who, under the name of Philalethes, left to posterity the first good—still one of the best-known—German translation of, and commentary on, the *Divine Comedy*. The Archduchess's chief interest was in charitable work, to

which she, aided by her faithful friend and lady-in-waiting, the Margravine Crescence Pallavicini, devoted the greatest part of her time. Her aim in life was to relieve poverty and misery. She was not content merely with fulfilling her formal duties as patroness of charitable associations. As her deputy in one of the largest charitable societies under her patronage, I had frequent opportunities of meeting the Archduchess. Her magnanimous and saint-like mind never failed to impress me profoundly. In the period when republican fervour was at its height, when even the most sacred things were of small account to many, the infernal propaganda against the dynasty did not spare even this noble woman, who had not a single enemy, since it was impossible for her to have any, and who all her life had done nothing but good. As it was impossible to find any point of attack, her piety was made the subject of ridiculous and ill-bred mockery. It is not difficult to make even the most sacred things seem ridiculous, especially in our far from spiritual age. In referring to the Archduchess, the word "goody-goody" was substituted for "good," and when "bigotry" was added to the charge, the speaker could be sure of the mocking applause of all those persons who are always attracted by a censorious judgment, especially when it has an air of indicating an unprejudiced and candid mind. But nothing could be more wrong-headed than to accuse the Archduchess Maria Josepha of "canting hypocrisy" or "bigotry," for these words imply a pose, imply insincerity, and nothing could have been more sincere and genuine than the quiet piety of the mother of the Emperor Karl. If one wanted an example to prove the ennobling influence of true piety and Catholic orthodoxy, one need only point to the noble figure of this great lady.

On the occasion of one of my visits to Miramar, I made the acquaintance of the Archduke Ludwig Salvator of Tuscany, a man of extraordinary endowments. He was well known as a considerable scholar, whose works, mostly published anonymously and illustrated by himself, on the subject of Mediterranean and deep-sea research are of great scientific importance. One day we were sitting at lunch in the dining-room of Schloss Miramar. The high doors, which gave on the terrace, were open, and through them we could see a slender yacht

approaching the Castle. We were idly wondering what it could be, when suddenly a figure appeared in the doorway from the terrace, a man in a threadbare frock coat, with dusty shoes and a most antiquated hat. We stared at this strange phenomenon. I thought it was a tramp who had lost his way. But to our extreme amazement, this fellow, with a few words of apology for disturbing the party, and with the ease of a man of the world, went up to the Archduchess Maria Josepha, who then recognized him as the Archduke Ludwig Salvator, and rose to welcome him. The dignity of his character and speech immediately banished the unfavourable impression produced by his neglect of his appearance. A chair was placed for him next to the Archduchess. He had hardly said a few words before we were under the spell of his undeniably remarkable personality. His conversation was easy and stimulating. When I remarked about the grapes that we were having for dessert that they were almost as big as the grapes mentioned in the Bible, he at once took up the topic, told us many interesting things about Palestine, especially about the extraordinary fertility of the country, which fully deserved the name of the Promised Land. The well-known biblical picture of the two men carrying an enormous bunch of grapes on a pole over their shoulders was no exaggeration. He had himself seen such grapes, which were often as big as little apples. As I was sitting next him and had been the one to introduce the subject, he addressed his remarks almost entirely to me. In spite of the interesting subject he was discussing, my glance could not help straying to his appearance. I noticed that he had no studs in his rather dirty cuffs; he had found a substitute in a little bit of string drawn through the button-holes. A few days later, the Archduchess Maria Josepha and the Archduke Karl returned this visit. Ludwig Salvator sent his yacht to Miramar to fetch the party. The yacht was remarkable because the biggest room in it resembled the study of a scholar. There were large bookshelves against the walls, on which books lay in the wildest confusion. We were looking at these signs of learning with some awe, when the Archduke Karl suddenly burst out laughing, and with a cry of "Whatever is this?" drew a not very clean, once white, lady's satin shoe from underneath a pile of books and

held it up in the air. As the yacht approached its destination, we saw a yawl manned by young sailors coming towards us. The Archduke had come to meet the Archduchess, and to escort her and the Archduke ashore. On our return to the yacht, which had been lying at anchor, the Archduke Karl told me that the sailors in the yawl were girls in disguise.

On 1st October, 1905, the Archduke's period of military service began. He joined the Seventh Dragoon Regiment of the Duke of Lorraine, in the garrison town of Bilin, where I visited him in the spring of 1906. During the winter of 1905-1906, I was at the Augarten a great deal. The Archduke had sprained his foot skating on New Year's Day, and was confined to bed for a considerable time, so that Ceschi and I were often sent for to help him to pass the time. At that time the Archduke Otto was lying seriously ill on a lower floor of the Augarten Palace. On the 10th October of the same year—I was on a visit to Miramar at the time—news came of a sudden and serious relapse in the Archduke's health. The Archduchess started for Schönau immediately, but returned to Miramar two days later, as the illness had taken a turn for the better. Ceschi and I did all we could to help the Archduke Karl, who was in a state of great depression, through those days of anxiety. On the 1st November, 1906, the Archduke Otto succumbed to his serious malady. Immediately after the funeral, the Archduke Karl, with his tutor, Count Georg Wallis, took up his abode in the Hradschin, the Royal Castle at Prague, where he applied himself to the study of law and political economy in the years 1906-1907 and 1907-1908. I had a certain amount of influence on those studies, as at Count Wallis's request I gave him my views on the subject in writing and drew up a programme of study. Count Wallis submitted this programme to the Emperor Franz Joseph, who approved it, after consulting the then head of the Ministry of Education, Freiherr von Bienerth. Count Wallis told me that on his way to present the programme to the Emperor he met the Archduke Franz Ferdinand in the ante-room; the Archduke showed a lively interest in the programme, and after glancing over it, expressed his satisfaction that it included Hungarian constitutional law, as this important and difficult subject required special care and attention on account

of its peculiar character. The director of studies was Hofrat Ritter von Ott, Professor at the Bohemian University in Prague. Lectures in special subjects were given by Professors Bráf, Goll, Pfaff, and Ulbrich. I regard it as my duty to make special mention of these studies of the Archduke, because wholly incorrect ideas were current about them, which ideas still persist.

On 13th November, 1906, the Archduke wrote asking me to visit him in Prague at an early date. A few days later, I made my first visit, which was frequently repeated in the course of the next two years. I had a room in the Castle which was next door to the room the window of which had been the scene of the notorious "defenestration" in the year 1618. When the Archduke Karl visited me in my room on the morning of the 17th November he drew my attention to this fact, and expressed his amazement that, considering the enormous height of the window from the ground (over 65 feet), the two imperial dignitaries and the secretary had all escaped with their lives. He then reviewed the terrible consequences for Bohemia of this event, and the Battle of the White Mountain. Hungary, too, he went on, had had its Battle of the White Mountain, the capitulation of Világos.<sup>1</sup> For Hungary, however, the consequences had not been permanent, which was excellent; but Bohemia still felt them. It was nothing new to me to listen to sound historical and political discussions from the mouth of the nineteen-year-old Archduke, who possessed a phenomenal memory. In fact, one had to be very well up in history to follow the rapid flight of his reasoning. But on this occasion I was absolutely amazed to find him, in this brief historical reminiscence, dealing with such assurance with one of the sorest points in the political history of our Monarchy.

During my frequent visits to Prague, the Archduke's studies in political science were repeatedly the subject of violent debates. In his studies he was not merely receptive; he often gave vent to sharp and bold criticism of political conditions and many State institutions. On one occasion discussion was so heated that it ended in our both losing our tempers. I had been stubbornly defending a conservative point of view. The arguments on both sides became more and

<sup>1</sup> In 1849.



more violent, and our points of view became more and more irreconcilable, until, finally, the Archduke broke off the discussion with the words: "It's impossible to argue with you. You are an incorrigible bureaucrat." That got me on the raw, for I had always hated bureaucratism. Next day at lunch tempers were still strained to start with. But suddenly a smile stole over the face of the Archduke, he raised his glass and said laughingly: "May the miserable bureaucrat live and learn!" That broke the ice. I joined in the laugh and retorted: "I thank Your Imperial Highness for your good intentions, but I am not a bureaucrat and am in no need of reform in that direction. But I candidly confess that I made a very poor show in yesterday's debate. My point of view was very difficult, and a thankless one to defend; but I could not leave such very modern ideas quite unopposed in one so near to the Throne."

On the conclusion of the Archduke's studies, I felt that even if he had not "ground" so very hard, he knew considerably more than many a one who leaves the University with a doctor's degree to his credit. His phenomenal memory was not merely a Hapsburg, but, perhaps, to an even greater degree, a Saxon inheritance. To this was added a personal characteristic, his gift for translating all he learnt immediately into practice, which made his studies much more interesting.

In the summer of 1908 the Archduke Karl joined his regiment at Brandeis, and after that devoted himself to military service. Previous to this, the 17th August, 1907, his twentieth birthday, was the exact date, his majority was declared. His former tutors, Count Wallis and Freiherr von Mattencloitt, were relieved of their office, and Prince Zdenko Lobkowitz, later the Adjutant-General of the Emperor Karl, was appointed head of the Household, and Count Franz Ledebur, Gentleman-in-Waiting in Ordinary. I visited the young Archduke at Brandeis too from time to time. Whenever he came to Vienna, he let me know, and used to invite me to accompany him on expeditions, and also, knowing my interest in art, on visits to exhibitions and museums. I will relate one not uninteresting episode belonging to that period. One autumn day in 1907, I accompanied the Archduke on a ride across the island of Lobau to Orth. Although I knew

that the Archduke Johann of Tuscany had not taken his title from Orth on the Danube but from another Castle of the same name belonging to him near Gmunden, I happened to speak of Johann Orth. I remarked that quite recently the newspapers had once again revived the legend that he was still alive. The Archduke looked at me in surprise, and asked laughingly whether I really believed that he had lost his life off Cape Horn. "He is as much alive as you or I. Papa corresponded with him up to the last." He then told me that Johann Orth was living a most contented life as a farmer in South America—he mentioned the name of the place, but it has escaped my memory. I was astounded at this revelation. When I asked what had really happened with regard to the alleged wreck of the "Santa Margherita," the Archduke replied that there was no doubt that the ship had gone down, but that he did not know the details. But one thing was quite certain, that Johann Orth was still alive. He must have left the ship before the catastrophe or else been saved. It may be mentioned that two letters from the Chief of Police at Concordia in the Argentine Republic, dated 23rd September, 1903, and 28th November, 1905, to the Uruguayan ex-Senator Don Eugenio Garzon are in existence, which mention that Johann Orth was resident in the department of Concordia in the Province of Entre Rios in the Argentine Republic in 1900 and 1903, and also that he departed for Japan before the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, Johann Orth seems to have made brief stays in Europe some years after his disappearance, as the Countess of Caserta,<sup>2</sup> his niece, as I learned from Count Franz Harrach, saw and spoke to him in Cannes. This also explained the remarkable fact that the Archduchess of Tuscany, the mother of Johann Orth, who in the first years after her son's alleged death, was plunged into deepest grief, on a certain date discarded her mourning, on learning that her son was still alive.

Towards the end of the year 1908, at the time of the annexation crisis, the Archduke Karl was in Vienna on leave.

<sup>1</sup> A translation of these letters appears in Appendix I. They were published in 1906 by their recipient.

<sup>2</sup> The Countess of Caserta was the daughter of Prince Franz de Paula von Bourbon-Sicily and his wife, the Archduchess Maria Isabella a sister of Johann Orth.

At that time preparations were on foot for the festivities to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of the Emperor Franz Joseph. A performance in his honour had been arranged for 1st December in the private theatre at the Palace of Schönbrunn. Almost all the youthful Archdukes and Archduchesses took part in it. The Archduke Karl, in an old Viennese costume, spoke the prologue, and, at the end of the performance, an epilogue composed by the Archduchess Marie Valerie. It was at this time that the Archduke Karl spoke to me about the then very gloomy political situation. He had been well posted up by his uncle, the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, in all the phases of the crisis, and also in the precautionary military measures to which it had given rise. This was the first time that the usually so happy and optimistically inclined Archduke expressed dark views about the future. He soon abandoned the question of the annexation crisis, and went on to discuss the future outlook for the Monarchy. He spoke of the tradition of his House, which consisted in adherence to the federalistic principle. We had, he said, departed too greatly from that principle, which we would have bitter cause to regret. We were now no more an Empire than the Germany of Bismarck was. And we needed an Empire such as the old Germanic Empire had been. To quote the Archduke's own words: "Uncle Franz has certainly very good ideas about the future, about which I may not give you any details, and of which besides I know only the outlines, but I think that even these ideas are only right up to a certain point. But beyond them there is no way out at all. We are driving towards a catastrophe; perhaps this will save us." The Archduke's talk of a catastrophe was not surprising, for the air was full of explosive material, and the danger of war was great. When I, long after the Revolution, looked up this entry in my diary,<sup>1</sup> I read it again and again. How correctly the Archduke for all his youth diagnosed the mortal disease not only of Austria-

<sup>1</sup> In my diary, which I have kept for many years, I almost always wrote up my conversations with the Archduke Karl on the evening of the day on which they took place. When I was head of his Private Office, I made it my custom to note down important conversations immediately afterwards in shorthand, and often I took down the Emperor's words during the discussions. Therefore, expressions of the Emperor quoted in this book must be practically the exact words he used.

Hungary but of Central Europe generally! I do not think that the views he then expressed were original. I imagine that they originated under the influence of an exchange of ideas with his uncle the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, with whom he had many discussions at that time. But be that as it may, he certainly expressed these opinions. Unfortunately my diary throws no further light on the subject.

It must have been about this time also<sup>1</sup> that the Archduke appeared unannounced one morning in my house in the Plösslgasse. He had come, he told me, from his uncle the Archduke Franz. Important interests were at stake. The so-called constitutional guarantees had been inveigled from His Majesty by the Hungarians during his illness. The Archduke Franz Ferdinand was furious about the affair, as it meant not only a limitation of the rights of the Crown, but also a watering-down in advance of the projected universal suffrage law. The Archduke Franz Ferdinand had, therefore, drawn up a memorandum protesting against this measure, and had asked the Archduke Karl, as the next heir to the Throne, to join in this protest against the procedure of the Hungarian Government. The document in question had been deposited in the State archives. The Archduke Karl added that he had complete confidence in my discretion, but said that he thought it important that I should know of the existence of this document, which would perhaps be of great future significance. I never heard anything more of the affair. Owing to the change in political conditions during the War, adhesion to arrangements of this kind was cancelled by the irresistible force of higher considerations. Whether this episode related to the same business as that described by the ex-Hungarian Minister, Josef Kristóffy, in an article in the *Pester Lloyd* in 1924, I do not know. It certainly must refer to some similar affair.<sup>2</sup> From a communication which the Archduke Franz Ferdinand made to him in May, 1912, Kristóffy appears to have inferred that the Archduke had fully initiated his nephew, the

<sup>1</sup> As the Archduke Karl gave me the following information in the strictest confidence, my diary does not give any further particulars. It is therefore possible that I am wrong about the date.

<sup>2</sup> The relative passage from Kristóffy's article in the *Pester Lloyd* is reproduced in Appendix II.

Archduke Karl, into his plans. I know that the latter was aware of the basic principles on which Franz Ferdinand would have established his Government, but I do not believe he was acquainted with the details of a definite "programme." I infer this from remarks made by the future Emperor.

I must make special mention of one hunting expedition, as it was the occasion of the first rumours about the Archduke's dissipated life. On 29th December, 1908, he invited me to make an excursion with him in the Semmering district. I proceeded to Reichenau, where I met the Archduke, and we went on to Semmering in the evening. On our arrival we had tea in the lounge of the hotel, without the Archduke's being recognized by any of the few guests who were present. The Archduke retired early, whereupon I also went to bed. Next day at breakfast he presented me with the badge which he had made, after his own design, for his hunting guests.<sup>1</sup> Then the Archduke, the Court Master of the Hunt, Eduard Grünkranz, and I drove in a sledge to a hunting lodge which Prince Liechtenstein had lent to the Archduke. There we had a snack and then took up our positions. We brought down a few head of big game, and when the light began to fail, descended to the valley, where the sledge was waiting to take us to the station. We had supper in the restaurant car. On our arrival in Vienna, the Archduke Karl drove me home, and then drove himself back to the Augarten. A day or two later, Count Wallis told me that there was a rumour going about in Vienna that we had had a regular orgy all night at the Liechtenstein hunting-lodge with a musical comedy star, and that there had been scandalous goings on. The rumour had reached the Emperor and the Archduke Franz Ferdinand. Wallis heard it from Count Paar. I immediately wrote a letter to Wallis, in which I described the harmless events of our hunting expedition, and asked him to give my letter to Count Paar. The Emperor, who, I afterwards found, had in any case put no faith in the rumour, now learned the true story. But the report of dissipations with musical comedy stars spread

<sup>1</sup> It consisted of the monogram C. F. J. in white and green enamel on a little woodcock's feather in dark oxidized silver, surmounted by the Archducal Crown, with a gold scroll underneath engraved with the words, "Prein, Lower Austria."

and continued to be believed by the population of Vienna. At the request of the Archduke, I had an investigation made, and discovered, among other things, that a musical comedy actress had borrowed an expensive piece of jewellery from a jeweller, and had told all her numerous friends, male and female, that it was a present from the Archduke. A fresh crop of marvellous tales grew up around this rumour, and people began to gossip about the Archduke's dissipated way of life. Thus the seed of malicious rumour was sown, and this seed, diligently watered, partly by credulous persons and scandal-mongers, and partly by enemies of the dynasty, finally grew into a poisonous tree which twined itself about the figure of the future Emperor.

On the 14th June, 1911, when I was doing a cure at Karlsbad, I received a telegram from the Archduke Karl at Pianore, telling me of his betrothal to the Princess Zita of Bourbon-Parma. On the 6th October of the same year, the Archduke, who was spending a few days in Vienna before his wedding, summoned me to the Augarten and, after dinner, gave me a hunting rifle, which he had inherited from his father, as a souvenir of our many shooting expeditions. He told me about his experiences in the past year, which had been so rich in events for him, and spoke of his coming marriage. I was very glad to see from his conversation that this was a love-match.

For some time after that I saw the Archduke very seldom. The Archducal couple, who first settled in the garrison town of Brandeis, moved to Kolomea in the spring of 1912, when the Seventh Dragoon Regiment, in which the Archduke was serving as a captain, was transferred there, and they remained there until the autumn of 1912. On 1st November the Archduke was made a major in the Thirty-ninth Infantry Regiment, and took over the command of its first battalion in the regimental barracks in Vienna. He and his wife took up their quarters in the Imperial Palace of Hetzendorf.<sup>1</sup> On 20th November, 1912, the Archduke Karl telegraphed to me: "The Archduchess Zita has given birth to a healthy boy." I was presented to my future Empress by the Archduke Karl on the occasion of the opening of an exhibition of which the Archducal couple were the patrons. Soon after this I was

<sup>1</sup> A palace near Vienna.

invited to dinner at Wartholz, and later had frequent opportunity, both at Reichenau and at Hetzendorf, to observe the beautiful and carefree life of the young couple.

## II

When, by the double murder at Sarajevo, the Archduke Karl Franz Joseph became the direct heir to the Throne, it became an urgent question whether the heir-apparent would have sufficient time to become familiar with political affairs and public life, so that, at the critical moment of his accession, he might not immediately fall into the toils of interested politicians. It was well known that the Archduke Franz Ferdinand had carefully prepared himself for his accession to power. He had proceeded on the perfectly correct assumption that his first measures, particularly the text of his Accession Manifesto, and the treatment of the question of his coronation as King of Hungary, that is to say, the postponement of the coronation until certain constitutional questions had been settled, would be of paramount importance for the future of his reign. The Archduke's brilliantly-managed secretariat was engaged in the elucidation of political conditions in Austria and Hungary. In amassing the necessary information, the Archduke Franz Ferdinand did not confine himself to the official machinery of State and the advisers to the Crown: he was rightly afraid that by these means he would obtain only a one-sided and unreliable picture of the real state of affairs. He knew that he could arrive at the truth only by comparing official reports with those of persons independent of the Government of the Emperor Franz Joseph. The public were only partially acquainted with the names of the fellow-workers and advisers of the Archduke. The names of his confidential advisers in Hungarian affairs, in particular, had to be kept a strict secret, otherwise the then Hungarian Government would have dealt ruthlessly with them. Many experiences, for example, those gained from the "Memorandum Trial,"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In June, 1892, three hundred Hungarian subjects of Rumanian nationality assembled in Vienna to submit to the Emperor Franz Joseph a

proved that the utmost prudence was necessary. The Archduke's Hungarian confidential advisers included the future Rumanian Prime Minister, Alexander Vajda Wojwod, the future Czechoslovak Minister, Milan Hodža, Brantsch, Wilder, the ex-Hungarian Minister Kristóffy, Deputy Steinacker and his son, Professor Steinacker of Innsbruck. The memoranda they drew up were of great political importance. I had the opportunity of reading many of them. They were thoroughly impartial and loyal, and free from all trace of byzantinism; they frankly set forth the national standpoint of the time, and plainly pointed out the dangers which threatened the Monarchy, not the nationalities, if Magyar methods were not checked in time.

It is doubtful whether the Archduke Franz Ferdinand had prepared a definite and detailed programme. I consider it unlikely. In any case it would not have been committed to paper. Unquestionably the Archduke had laid down for himself definite political rules for the future guidance of his reign from his study of the internal structure of the Hapsburg Empire and the information he had compiled; nevertheless, as were and are all the Hapsburgs in a high degree, he was too much the born statesman to have decided on a definite course in ignorance of the future grouping of political forces. Like the bee in the honeycomb, the Archduke Franz Ferdinand industriously and steadily filled his archives with political material, so that, when his time came, he would be not merely the formal ruler, but also the intellectual sovereign of his Empire. It is safe to assume that, knowing the organic diseases of the Monarchy, he had decided to apply appropriate remedies. He must also have given much thought to the problem of preserving for himself the necessary freedom of action; there-

memorandum, which set forth the desperate position of the Hungarian Rumanians in face of the perpetual suspicion and persecution of their Hungarian overlords. But they got no further than the Emperor's private secretary, who received the memorandum. An audience with the Emperor was refused. The memorandum was returned to the President of the Rumanian National Party at the end of July through the Hungarian Prime Minister. Legal proceedings were taken against the authors of the document. The case was tried at the Assizes in Klausenberg in May 1894, and ended in the sentence of the accused to a period of imprisonment not exceeding five years.



fore, he devoted particular attention to the consideration of his first measures as Emperor. The problems connected with the change of rulers were for him the most urgent. Above all, he recognized that the attitude to be adopted with regard to Hungary, the Compromise Act of 1867, and the question of his coronation as King of Hungary were of the first importance for the future of his reign. He knew that, after he had taken the coronation oath, he would have forfeited his freedom of decision with regard to the very problems the solution of which was of paramount importance for the future of the Monarchy. On these constitutional questions, Aulic Councillor Lammasch, together with Count Ottokar Czernin, the then Secretary of Legation on perpetual leave, were the Archduke's chief advisers. But the Count's position was difficult, for compared to this great expert, whose arguments were drawn from positive knowledge and ripe experience, the Count was an untrained beginner, a not always skilful and always dangerous dilettante in political science. The Archduke Franz Ferdinand, therefore, rejected most of Count Czernin's proposals.<sup>1</sup>

Only the main features were known of the principles by which Franz Ferdinand would have steered his course. But it was known that he considered that the one possibility of solving all the problems of the Empire lay in the preservation or the development of the pragmatic conception of unity and Empire,<sup>2</sup> and in a national-federalistic structure for the Danube Monarchy, that is to say, he was a representative of that school which Count Tisza, a few months after the murder of the Archduke, stigmatized as "dangerous madness." The political leaders of Hungary fearfully avoided all inconvenient positive criticism of a national-federalistic imperial policy simply by declaring and broadcasting their opinion that every advocate of this policy, including, therefore, the heir to the Throne, was an enemy of Hungary. The Archduke's hatred of Hungary was one of the many legends which had been woven

<sup>1</sup> For further details, see *Heinrich Lammasch, seine Aufzeichnungen, sein Wirken und seine Politik*, published by Franz Deuticke, Vienna and Leipzig, 1922.

<sup>2</sup> One proof of this is that the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, in October, 1911, made a formal protest against the alteration in the designation of the War Ministry from "Imperial War Ministry" to "War Ministry." See Appendix III.

around his figure. Although I had only spoken twice to the late heir-apparent and was, therefore, not among those who really knew him, nevertheless, I was no stranger to the trend of his political ideas. I had authentic information from the Archduke Karl, and I learned a great deal from men who worked for the Archduke Franz Ferdinand and were familiar with his political principles. There is no doubt that the Archduke had ideas about the internal constitutional structure of the Monarchy and the principles on which it should be reformed which were in sharp opposition to the principles of those in authority in Hungary. This very fact was a national crime in their eyes. None the less, although many of his political friends thought to win the favour of the Archduke by Magyarophobe memoranda, and although Tisza and all the other influential Hungarian politicians feared the heir-apparent, because they were alarmed for their own power, it does not by any means follow that the Archduke hated Hungary. That was not the case. I have a thorough knowledge of the principles which governed the Archduke's political thought. I have gradually assembled the various parts that complete the picture. Nowhere have I come across any signs of that hatred of Hungary which was and still is falsely imputed to him. The blame for spreading this legend mostly belongs to those who feared him or who far overshot the mark in their blind zeal. From my study of his personality I have emerged convinced that he would have been a great Emperor and a worthy wearer of the crown of Saint Stephen, for this crown was sacred to him, far more sacred than to those Magyars who, when he came to their country, received their King crowned with the crown of Saint Stephen with machine gun fire. It was not the Hungarians that Franz Ferdinand hated, but the selfish, chauvinistic Magyar leaders in Hungarian politics, whom he recognized as Hungary's most dangerous enemies. Them he did hate. And he hated them with the passionate determination native to him.

As these political leaders were almost the sole representatives of Hungary, it was only natural if the feelings of hatred which Franz Ferdinand felt more or less impersonally for the chauvinistic policy of Hungary, became generalized into hatred for Hungary itself. But I believe that I am not

wrong in asserting that the then heir to the Throne rightly recognized that by maintaining Hungary intact he was safeguarding the most precious jewel in his crown. For this reason he devoted special attention to Hungarian conditions. Nothing interested him more than what was happening in Hungary, nothing made him more uneasy than the short-sighted policy of the privileged leaders of Hungary; for, from the point of view of her future sovereign, he realized that this policy was bound to endanger the existence of Hungary in an extreme degree. The melancholy final phase shows how correct the Archduke's judgment was. It would, however, be a great mistake to think that the World War alone was responsible for Hungary's melancholy end. The World War merely hastened her ruin. It would have happened in any case. The national will of the non-Magyar majority of the population of Hungary would have made itself felt by revolutionary methods in any circumstances. The hate of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, therefore, was not for Hungary and the Magyars, but for those who by their political power ruled Hungary to her detriment, and this was the reason why they and their innumerable satellites in business circles looked forward with dread to the reign of Franz Ferdinand. A well-directed bullet released them from this dread. The then Hungarian deputy, Prince Lajos Windischgraetz, who arrived in Budapest immediately after the Sarajevo murder, describes the atmosphere then prevailing in the Hungarian capital in the following words: "Political circles in Budapest were as if released from a nightmare. Undisguised joy was apparent in Tisza's party. A sigh of relief seemed to go up from the country!"<sup>1</sup>

When, on the 17th July, 1914, the deputation from the Serbian National Party in the Bosnian Diet, consisting of the Vice-President, Dr. Dimović, Dr. Jojkić, and Dr. Vasić, appeared before Count Tisza, and Dr. Dimović, as spokesman of the deputation, expressed his horror at the atrocity of Sarajevo, Tisza made a deprecatory gesture and said: "The good God has so willed it, and we must in all things be grateful to the good God."

<sup>1</sup> *Vom roten zum schwarzen Prinzen*, by Prince Ludwig Windischgraetz, page 50.

The personal relations between the Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his nephew were as good as they could be. The elder Archduke merely showed a slight sensitiveness when the Archduke Karl was designated as the direct heir to the Throne, as was done fairly frequently abroad. He made a regular collection of press cuttings bearing on the subject, and handed them over from time to time, with observations which were occasionally quite cutting, to Count Georg Wallis, the Archduke Karl's tutor. In accordance with the provisions of the Pragmatic Sanction, and the declaration made by the Archduke Franz Ferdinand on the occasion of his marriage, the Archduke Karl Franz Joseph was the heir to the Throne, provided that no heir entitled to succeed was born to Franz Ferdinand from a second non-morganatic marriage. Although the legal position was perfectly clear, the question of the succession was always being brought up again both at home and abroad, but especially in Hungary.<sup>1</sup> In order to put a stop to such discussions, which were even more zealously pursued after the proclamation of the Duchess of Hohenberg as "Imperial and Royal Consort," the Archduke Franz Ferdinand intended, immediately after his accession to the Throne, to proclaim his nephew, the Archduke Karl Franz Joseph, as the Archducal heir-apparent "in agreement with and in vindication of the provisions of the Pragmatic Sanction." The real position would thus have been exactly defined without prejudice to the rights of any possible offspring of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand entitled to succeed to the Throne, and the heir to the Throne would have had the position of a Crown Prince. The Archduke Franz Ferdinand again and again complained to Count Wallis that he had so little influence on the Government, and often did not hear of important decrees,

<sup>1</sup> On the occasion of the marriage of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand to Countess Sophie Chotek (afterwards Duchess of Hohenberg), the Party of Independence immediately declared that the Family Statute did not apply to Hungary, and that the marriage was, therefore, not morganatic, and that the consort of the heir-apparent was regarded as the rightful queen in Hungary. When a son was born to the Archduke on 29th September, 1902, the Party immediately brought up the question again in the Press, and greeted the infant Archduke as the heir-apparent. Bohemia also refused to be behindhand. The Czech Radicals also declared the new-born infant to be the one rightful heir to the Throne of Wenceslas.

even such as might have a future prejudicial effect, until after they had been published. He used regularly to add: "When I am Emperor, I shall have Karl with me in the Hofburg and let him work with me." The heir to the Throne, he went on, must be informed on all points; moreover, he had the right to advise on measures which might have decisive effects in the future. Only in this way could a change of rulers be effected without violent upheavals.

### III

The work done by the Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his advisers in the interests of the Monarchy was done in vain. His "programme" was spoken of as something done with, and, on account of his unpopularity, no regret was expressed and no attention was paid to the obvious consideration whether at least some use might have been made of his work for purposes of information. The advisers of the murdered Archduke had lost all influence, and those of the Emperor Franz Joseph were interested only in ensuring that the inconvenient and strict supervision to which they were subject in the lifetime of Franz Ferdinand should not be continued by the Archduke Karl Franz Joseph. Only the few who were intimate with the Archduke Karl, not politically—for up to 1914 he stood outside political circles—but personally, were anxious lest his accession to the Throne might find him unprepared. What a mass of grave questions would have to be decided immediately he succeeded, and what far-reaching importance the first measures of the new Emperor would have, no one could help knowing who was acquainted with the political history and the political tendencies of the Monarchy. I regarded it as indispensable that the Archduke Karl should carefully prepare himself for his accession, that he should be quite clear about the first decisive steps of his reign, and that he should have exhaustive knowledge of the affairs of the political life of the Monarchy both as regards things and persons. Therefore, I composed in July, 1914, immediately before the

outbreak of War, when I was at my country estate, a letter on the subject, which I addressed to Count Georg Wallis, the Archduke's former tutor. But I did not make up my mind to send it until November, 1914.

Soon after that date—Count Wallis had meantime handed the letter to the Archduke—I was received in audience at Schönbrunn. I took the opportunity of drawing the personal attention of the Archduke Karl Franz Joseph to the dangers which might be involved in an insufficient preparation for accession. The attitude to be taken towards Hungary, in particular, required exhaustive study and a scrupulous weighing of the balance of forces as well as the drawing up of a well thought out programme, in order that he might be able to take the proper measures as soon as he took over the reins of Government. I also laid stress on the absolute indispensability of the heir-apparent's being informed about all the more important measures of the Government. I gave detailed reasons for the view expressed in my letter to Wallis that the institution of a secretariat similar to that of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand was necessary. I advised the Archduke to take the initiative with the Emperor Franz Joseph, and ask him for permission to establish such a secretariat. The Archduke told me that I was trying to force already open doors by bringing the necessity of this procedure before his notice, "but," he added, "from this point of view my position is as bad as it could possibly be. Uncle Franz, quite without intending it, of course, made things terribly difficult for me as heir to the Throne." The relations between the Archduke Franz and His Majesty, he went on, had, as everybody knew, been rather strained, and if he were to attempt anything or ask the Emperor for anything of the kind I suggested, it would at once make His Majesty both suspicious and uneasy. Even more suspicious and uneasy would be all the former opponents of the Archduke Franz, that is to say, the Emperor's immediate environment, who certainly would not fail to give ever fresh food to his suspicions. A strained situation would immediately result, and he did not know what might not be the political consequences. In any case, his excellent relations with His Majesty, which enabled him to draw the Emperor's attention to many things, would

be disturbed. The Archduke went on to speak of the Emperor and the lively interest he still took in all the events of the campaigns; he still possessed his phenomenal memory, and knew where every battalion was and who commanded it. He also stated that the Emperor was accessible to every reasonable suggestion. The Ministers perpetually excused their own lack of initiative on the plea of the necessity for consideration of the great age of the Emperor. That was quite out of place. The Emperor was still the youngest and most energetic of them all. The Archduke spoke with great veneration of the Emperor, and repeated what he had often said to me before, that the reason for the many defects and corruption of our politics was to be sought in the convenience of his advisers, who were anxious about their own position, rather than in the Emperor's age and lack of energy. After discussing certain other affairs, the Archduke took leave of me with the remark that he would send for me frequently, and would find occasion for further discussion of the subject I had raised.

I frequently accompanied the Archduke on his journeys to or from Teschen, and again and again took occasion to speak of the necessity of preparation for coming to the Throne, and especially of a thorough study of the political situation in Hungary. This was my "*ceterum censeo*." The Archduke did not know how to manage it. Permission to establish a secretariat could not be obtained from the Emperor Franz Joseph, as he would ask his Ministers, and then no result would come of it. "When Uncle Franz was heir to the Throne," the Archduke said to me, "there were two tendencies. Often the Ministers did not know what they should do. That was certainly a bad thing; now, in war time, it may be fatal." When I retorted that it was merely a matter of preparation for rule, I received the truly pertinent answer: "It is never a matter of the truth, but always entirely of what men make of a thing." Finally, the Archduke instructed me to inform him from time to time of what I learned and thought he ought to know about.

On one subject I made very thorough reports to the Archduke. I called his attention to the danger which threatened the Press, the source from which the public formed their opinions, from the incursion of the capitalist. I said that it

was a great mistake to think that the journalists willingly took refuge under the wing of the capitalist from reasons of material advantage; they would do it only so long as we gave them no moral support, but simply abandoned them to the capitalist and did not give them a place in the body politic consonant with the high importance of their honourable office. If the Government calmly looked on while the most reputable papers fell into the hands of a few wealthy and unscrupulous persons striving for power and material profit, the honourable calling of journalism would be reduced to a servile trade, and the springs be poisoned from which the *peuple* largely derived their intellectual nourishment and formed their judgment on men and things. England was an eloquent example of the pernicious influence of a trust press. What the Northcliffe Press was letting loose in the world was more harmful than poison and shells. It was a mistake to think that the legislature could not interfere; only an inflexible will was required to take the initiative in this direction. The incursion of the capitalists into the Austrian press was of comparatively recent date. If the Government did not check it, as it could very easily do, it would very soon have good reason to feel in its own person the evil effects of a press no longer independent but in the pay of the capitalists. The independence of the press could be protected by moral support and legislative reforms, and to do this would be an excellent piece of statesmanship. I pointed out that King Edward, assuredly one of the greatest statesmen of recent times, had realized the importance of an independent press and the frightful danger of a trustified press, and that it had been his aim to free the English press from the stranglehold of the capitalists.<sup>1</sup> As a practical measure I advocated the appointment of the chief editors, Moritz Benedikt and Wilhelm Singer, of the greatest political daily newspapers, the *Neue Presse* and the *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, as members of the Upper House, by which means the position of the professional journalist would be en-

<sup>1</sup> King Edward wished, by voluntary contributions from the wealthiest people in England, to create a fund the interest of which would maintain *The Times*, so that it could serve the public in complete independence regardless of revenue from subscriptions and advertisements. King Edward died without being able to carry out his plan, which was chiefly aimed against the forcible inclusion of *The Times* in the Northcliffe group of papers.



hanced. I also called the Archduke's attention to the resolution passed with regard to the foreign news service at the Congress of representatives of the *Reichsverband der deutschen Presse*, in August, 1915. This resolution stated that it was desirable that all the factors concerned, especially the expert professional representative bodies, should be called together to work out a fundamental plan. The foreign news service, equally important for both political and economic problems, could not be carried on satisfactorily by any organization of interested parties however rich in capital. The news service in foreign countries required a great independent organization which would counter-balance the fatal one-sided influencing of the world by the great foreign news agencies. In addition to other reforms, the resolution also called for professionally trained press attachés at the more important embassies and legations. The Archduke immediately sent for the Prime Minister, Count Stürgkh, to discuss the question with him. But Count Stürgkh was negative and inclined to reject the idea. He gave the Archduke a lecture on the Austrian press, and arrived at the conclusion that there was nothing to be done, and that for that matter the press in all countries had become more or less subordinate to the capitalist, because all large papers were commercial undertakings and dependent on capital. He also asserted that he did not find in this the dangers that the Archduke saw. I had expected the Prime Minister to take this sort of attitude, and, when the Archduke brought up the subject at my next audience, I expressed the opinion that so important a question could be solved only by the power of the will of the sovereign. For the moment the only thing to do was to bear this serious matter in mind.

It was on one of our journeys to Teschen (6th March, 1915) that the Archduke Karl spoke of the Hungarian situation. He observed that, now that the War had broken out, the Hungarian problem must be regarded and dealt with in a somewhat different way from what would have been possible and likely to be successful in peace time. I perceived from this remark that the heir-apparent held the ideas of his uncle, the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, to be, partially at least, impracticable during the War. I pointed out that the treatment of the Hungarian problem had for long been completely un-

sound in various directions, and that the harmful effects of this unsound policy could never be neutralized by measures which were diametrically opposed to the aspirations of the Magyars. But I thought it would be possible to induce the Magyars to renounce national autonomy if Hungary were granted a prominent place in the unified Monarchy, that is to say, if a greater Hungarian imperial idea were substituted for the greater Austrian imperial idea. This was the only way to win the political strength of Hungary for the interests of the Empire as a whole.

Soon afterwards I submitted a memorandum to the heir-apparent, which I had composed some time before and shown to several friends, and in which I explained the advantages of conceding a foremost place to Hungary and shifting the balance to Budapest, and, as a practical measure, advocated the establishment of a federal State in which the presidential rights should belong pragmatically to the Hungarian Crown. The chief advantage of such a constitutional structure lay in the fact that the Magyars would be represented in no foreign State as the one nation in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, and would, therefore, concentrate all their strength and energy on the internal affairs of the Empire. I regarded the federalization of the Empire and the concession of national autonomy in the various lands as an absolutely indispensable condition, which had been further reinforced by the War, and more especially by the fact that our enemies had inscribed the "liberation of small nations" on their banner. If this object could not be attained against the will of Hungary, perhaps it would be possible if concessions were granted to Hungary. In submitting the memorandum to the Archduke, I had no other purpose than to point out a way which might have been made practical by sounding influential persons in advance. The future Minister, Dr. Ivan von Zolger, a convinced Yugoslav, to whom I gave a copy of the memorandum, said to me that it was an extraordinarily astute proposal, with which the Yugoslavs might also be able to agree. On the journey to Teschen, during which the Archduke Karl discussed Hungarian conditions with me, he told me with indignation that the building of the State Munition Factory at Pressburg had been stopped by a Decree of the Council of Ministers, because the Hun-

garians declared that such a munitions factory would injure Hungarian industry (*recte* Manfred Weiss). In this way, in the first place, the munitions factory necessary for the army was not proceeded with, and, in the second, several millions of public money were wasted. Count Stürgkh, said the Archduke, had had no real knowledge of the affair at the Council of Ministers, otherwise he would never have given his consent. He added: "That's how things are done with us. I should like to know what is the use of a Council of Ministers if everything happens as Tisza wants it to."

The introduction of the heir-apparent into the affairs of Government took place in the end in the very way against which I had, I think rightly, warned him. The Austrian and Hungarian Prime Ministers took the matter in hand, and ordered Ministers and permanent officials of all departments to report to the Archduke Karl Franz Joseph. All these gentlemen received strict instructions on what they were to report. They were strictly forbidden to depart from the lines which had been laid down. It is unnecessary to expatiate on the valuelessness of reports of this kind. In themselves they certainly produced no ill effects because the Archduke could assess them at their true value; nevertheless, it was a mistake not to give the heir to an Empire, the very existence of which was in danger in a period of enormous revolutionary changes, and which could only ensure its continuance by thorough-going reforms, by an alteration of 180° in the course, no other preparation for his very heavy responsibilities as its ruler, except pointing out guiding principles which led to a regular rut, and preventing him from having a free view across the threshold of a new epoch.

#### • IV

On the 22nd December, 1915, the Archduke Karl summoned me to Reichenau. He received me in the dining-room, formerly the drawing-room of the Archduchess Maria Josepha. Ever since the heir-apparent and his wife had lived there, the Villa Wartholz at Reichenau had been furnished with ex-

treme simplicity and almost middle-class homeliness. Suitability was the standard. The largest and lightest room, formerly the dining-room, had been turned into the nursery. I had to pass it when I was summoned from the waiting-room to my audience. The Archduchess Zita was playing with the children; she greeted me and sent the little fair-haired Archduke Otto, the future Crown Prince, to shake hands with me.

The Archduke Karl discussed general political affairs at first. He recommended me to read the Baernreither memorandum on the economic and political relations of Austria-Hungary to Germany, and added that this memorandum had enormously interested the German Emperor, who otherwise thought very highly of Baernreither. I replied that I had no great opinion of Baernreither. His alleged knowledge of Yugoslav conditions had always been drawn from extremely dubious and even disreputable sources, and he had, by his garrulousness, betrayed many things to his confidential agents, who had actually been unmasked as spies, to the disadvantage of our country. He was, I said, a good orator and an adroit politician, but of a highly hysterical temperament—*voilà tout*. Of the gifts of a statesman, he had not a trace. I had had ample opportunity in the House of Lords of getting to know him thoroughly. As he was more highly gifted than most of his party colleagues, he played a kind of prophet's part in the Constitutional Party, but that meant nothing at all.

The Archduke went on to speak of the widespread aims at world power of the Germans in the Empire. I replied that the pursuit of these aims would meet a highly retarding factor in the social revolution which was preparing in the World War. We must get well into our heads the idea that after the War there would be a significant and decisive shift to the Left among the people. If the princes opposed this change of front, it might well be that they would lose their crowns. The important thing was to prevent this social shift from being carried out by revolutionary means. An evolutionary process could be encouraged by granting certain demands which could not be avoided, before they were extorted by highwaymen's methods. The Archduke agreed with all I said and added: "It will interest you to hear that the German Emperor

recently spoke to me in the same sense.<sup>1</sup> It is even more necessary in Germany, for Prussia is in any case considerably more reactionary than Austria." "But the most reactionary of all," I replied, "is Hungary. Hungary is the unrestricted domain—not of the King, but of the gentry. They are hindering with a political skill which cannot be denied both the consolidation of the royal power and the emergence of the national rights of the people." In any reform of the Monarchy, I added, the lever must be applied in Hungary, for the problem of Austria centres not only politically but also socially in the problem of Hungary. Hungary was the decisive factor. It would be a great mistake to believe that the public opinion of Hungary found expression in the politics pursued in the Hungarian Parliament under the leadership of Count Tisza. Thus the Yugoslav question, on which our policy in time of peace must not least depend, could not be solved at all as long as it was dominated by Hungary. The Archduke Karl expressed the opinion that Count Tisza was also thinking about the solution of the Yugoslav question, from the Hungarian standpoint, it was true, and that he had already claimed Dalmatia for the Hungarian Crown in a memorandum addressed to the Emperor.<sup>2</sup> "I am very doubtful," I replied, "whether the Yugoslav question will find its final historical solution in this sense, as this would not be a solution of the question, but would merely make it more acute."

In the further course of conversation the Archduke told me something of how he intended to arrange the business of Government when his time came. He certainly had no idea of spending all his time at a desk. "One must know one's own capacities," he said, "I am not made for dealing with documents. I much prefer to communicate with people directly

<sup>1</sup> This opinion found expression in the Easter Message of the German Emperor for the year 1917, not so much in what it actually promised as in its underlying motives: "The experiences of this struggle for the existence of the Empire are ushering in with lofty seriousness a new epoch. . . . After the enormous achievement of the whole nation in this terrible struggle, there can, I am convinced, be no longer any place for the class franchise in Prussia."

<sup>2</sup> This memorandum was left in the secret archives of the Private Office, but it is no longer among the Private Office documents according to information supplied to me.

and not through the medium of paper and ink. Please do not misunderstand me. I am quite aware that writing work must be done, but I will leave that to my entourage. Generally, I will have to make greater demands on them than is now the case with His Majesty. Baron Schiessl reports only once a week. My future private secretary will submit the documents to me, because I shall have to be very economical with my time. I must get to know the country and the people, must get into touch with all sorts of men, in order to arrive at an independent judgment."

After an interval the Archduke asked me if I knew of a private secretary for him. I replied that it was uncommonly difficult to answer this question. I must first pass in review the various people I knew. Then the Archduke said that he already had a candidate. "You are my only candidate for this post," he went on. "There are few people whom I have known so long and so well as you, and I am sure that I can absolutely rely on your trustworthiness. This confidence is of supreme importance. You have served in all departments and in various Ministries, and have a large store of first-hand knowledge, and so have had a professional training for the position." I replied that the decision whether I could accept such a position would be a matter of conscience with me. I thanked the Archduke for his gracious confidence, and added that I would in any case immediately set to work to prepare myself very carefully for this office of trust. To all outward appearances a private secretary was merely the head of the Imperial Office, but in reality his sphere of influence was different and considerably more important. Political discussions would naturally arise out of the reports submitted, and it would be the duty of the Emperor's private secretary to call attention to everything that it was necessary for the Emperor to know before arriving at a decision. I must in any case beg for his gracious permission to put all my convictions plainly and without reserve before my most gracious master, and call his attention to pitfalls, of which there would assuredly be no lack.

The Archduke then rose and came out with me into the hall, where a locked despatch case was lying on a table. He opened it and showed me what a mass of documents was sub-

mitted to His Majesty. These were documents which by the Emperor's instructions had been handed over for the Archduke to deal with. "You see what a pile of stuff I have to read. At present I do it, because I have time. But later I shall be unable to spend my time reading documents. The study of documents will be the business of the private secretary, who will afterwards make a report on them to me."

At this point the Archduchess Zita came into the hall, and said it was not prudent to discuss affairs which were not meant for ears which might be listening behind the doors in this open place, where there were so many doors in the walls. She took a lamp and carried it into the dining-room herself. It was the first time I observed that the heir-apparent had a clever wife, who was more prudent than her husband. Then I remembered that a little while before this, at my audience at Schönbrunn, the Archduke Karl, when he wanted to note something down, took out a locked note-book, which he opened with a little key, and locked again after he had made his entry. This was certainly a present from the Archduchess Zita, who had reason to think such discretion necessary. The Archduke took leave of me with the words: "Well, whatever happens, you must have been interested to learn my intentions with regard to yourself."

Soon afterwards the Archduke Karl was entrusted with the command of an Army Corps on the South-Western Front, and remained on active service until the death of the Emperor Franz Joseph.

## CHAPTER III

### THE POLITICAL SITUATION AT THE END OF THE REIGN OF THE EMPEROR FRANZ JOSEPH

#### I

THE Archduke Karl's announcement at the audience of 22nd December, 1915, that he intended, when the time came, to appoint me his private secretary, was the beginning of a period of hard work for me. As my business as head of the Chancery of the Upper House had been reduced to a minimum, and as the administrative business of the military hospital I had established in Parliament House did not make excessive demands on me, I had plenty of time to devote myself to an intensive course of study. I had long realized that Austrian problems could rightly be understood only in relation to Hungary, or the Monarchy as a whole. So I first threw myself into the study of the political history and existing conditions and tendencies in Hungary. I read up the extensive literature, both home-produced and foreign, on the subject of Hungary and the nationality questions, and I got into touch with the leaders and writers of the parties not represented in the Hungarian Parliament, with the nationalities in particular, not directly, as this did not seem feasible in view of the position I was going to occupy, but through suitable and reliable agents. The official policy of Hungary, its point of view and direction, were, of course, sufficiently well known. These were quite clear and needed no investigation. But unofficial, non-represented Hungary was not only not known, but was kept fearfully hidden behind a heavy veil. The other side was never heard. It did not dare to raise its voice, for anyone in Hungary who did not swear allegiance to the Hungarian National State, or who paid homage to the imperial idea, was branded as a traitor and an enemy of the nation, and exposed to most unpleasant persecution. The Hungarian press, being in financial difficulties, was depend-



ent on the Government, the floor of the House was the exclusive domain of the upper stratum of the Magyars.<sup>1</sup> So it was impossible to tell what were the political views of the great majority of the population of Hungary.

In my extensive and thorough journey of exploration, which lasted nearly a year, through the province of Hungarian politics, I was always and everywhere coming upon the traces of the murdered heir to the Throne, the Archduke Franz Ferdinand. He had passed the same way, and, as I was later to discover, had come to the same conclusion as I did, a conclusion which indeed must have presented itself automatically to any impartial and not merely superficial and dilettante investigator. I deeply regret that none of the Austrian statesmen gave themselves the trouble of investigating political conditions in Hungary, and that therefore none of them—I am speaking, of course, of those statesmen who were the official advisers of the Crown—acquired the knowledge which was an indispensable prerequisite for any effective statesman-like achievement in the Monarchy. That Austrian statesmen did not understand the Hungarian position is proved by the fact that they had not the courage to oppose the Hungarian political leaders. They took anxious precautions against coming into conflict with Hungary. If they had had any real knowledge they would have been bound to realize that Hungary's apparent power was only a sham, of which there was no need to feel any alarm.

Hungary was not the solid structure it was officially represented and generally believed to be. Much less was it inspired by a united national will such as was displayed in the Hungarian Parliament. The non-Magyar population of Hungary was federalist, and did not believe in Magyar dominance. Nor was it, with the exception of a section of the Hungarian Serbs and a few Transylvanian Rumanians, irredentist in sentiment, but, from the national political point of view, looked for help from Vienna. Thus more than 45 per cent. of the total population of Hungary, excluding Croatia, could not be counted on to support the consolidation of the Hungarian National State. Moreover, even a large part of the Magyar

<sup>1</sup> Out of 413 seats, they held 407. Thus the eight million Hungarian subjects belonging to the other nationalities were represented by six members.

population had long ceased to be contented with the rule of the upper ten thousand. National chauvinism had so far passed its zenith as to have largely lost its attraction, although still thrown into the political struggle by the political leaders. It had ceased to influence any but those who were willing to delude themselves about the selfish nature of the impulse which led them to join the camp of those in authority. The great mass of the population had begun to turn their attention to practical questions, like the land, bread, and taxation. They knew that the economic conditions with which they were dissatisfied would not improve so long as the political power was exclusively in the hands of the Hungarian nobility, the gentry, and the rich, mostly Jewish, commercial classes.

This definitely democratic movement was a consequence of the unsound agrarian conditions in Hungary. The steadily increasing emigration figures were an alarming symptom. In the year 1908, 200,000 persons emigrated from Hungary, among whom Magyars were approximately as numerous as non-Magys, whereas up to about the end of the nineteenth century the emigration movement was confined to the non-Magyar population. The hereditary distribution of the land, the exclusion of millions of Magyars from the possession of Hungarian soil, and, most important of all, the non-intensive cultivation of the great *latifundia* had become anachronisms. The agrarian position was no longer compatible with a flourishing state of finance, with the progressive increase of the population, and the awakening of class-consciousness in the agricultural proletariat. Of the 19 million inhabitants of Hungary, 14 millions lived by agriculture. Of these, 10 millions were landless. On the other hand, 33.5 per cent.,<sup>1</sup> or one-third of the productive land (7.5 million hectares), consisted of large estates, either held on fideicommissum or belonging to the Church, which were owned by rather less than 2,000 persons. In 20 comitats 40 to 60 per cent. of the agricultural land was in the hands of large land-owners.<sup>2</sup> It is unnecessary to quote further figures. In the period of dualism (this deserves special mention because it is

<sup>1</sup> In Germany, 10 per cent.

<sup>2</sup> The largest *latifundia* were in Transdanubia, the next largest in Szabolcs, Zemplin, and the Banat.

typical of the system), the ruling parties had considerably increased the number of persons holding land on *fideicommissum*: about 6 million yokes<sup>1</sup> of land were brought under this system of tenure.

Since the powerful large landowners were able to exercise a decisive influence on customs and taxation policy, they had no incentive to intensive cultivation of the soil. As they were in possession of political power, they naturally preferred to secure their income by influencing tariff legislation and regulating the pressure of taxation rather than by tackling the always difficult problem of increased production. Thus, for example, it is said that in the comitat of Békés the peasant paid on an average 20 kronen as land-tax per hectare, while the neighbouring large landowner paid only 3-4 kronen per hectare of land of the same quality. I am unable to verify the correctness of this statement, but various trustworthy people admitted to me that this kind of disparity in taxation between large and small landowners was a well-known and incontestable fact. It is explained by the circumstance that the assessment was based on a land-tax register which had not been revised for forty years. The classification of the land was also in the hands of the comitat authorities, on whom the large landowners were able to exercise, and did actually exercise, a direct and very strong influence.<sup>2</sup> The backward state of agriculture in Hungary becomes clear if we compare it with the progress and output of German agriculture. The comparison must be prefaced by the statement that natural conditions in Hungary are far more favourable than in the German Empire. And yet the productivity of agriculture in the generally poor, sandy soil of Germany almost doubled in the last three decades before the War, whereas in Hungary the increase in productivity was hardly worth mentioning. In the years preceding the War, Germany produced per hectare on an average 19 metric hundredweights of cereals and 74 metric hundredweights of potatoes, while the incomparably

<sup>1</sup> A Hungarian "joch" = 1.422 acres. (Translators' note.)

<sup>2</sup> In the year 1909 69 million kronen were paid in land-tax by the small agriculturalists and 29 millions by the large landowners, although the latter were in possession of twice as much land. (Deputy Béla Rákovsky, in a speech made in the Hungarian Parliament on 9th July, 1910.)

better soil of Hungary produced rather less than 12 metric hundredweights of cereals and 56 of potatoes. The comparison is still more unfavourable to Hungary in the matter of live stock. Between the years 1870 and 1911, Germany showed an increase of 42 per cent. in cattle, 23 per cent. in horses, and 300 per cent. in pigs, while Hungary for the same period showed an increase of only 18 per cent. in cattle, 40 per cent. in pigs, and actually a decrease in horses.

If we consider that agriculture was the one source of revenue from taxation of any account in Hungary, and that an intensive cultivation of the soil might have made it enormous, it is quite clear that the backward state of agricultural cultivation, combined with the perfectly monstrous conditions on which the land was held, had a very injurious effect on the economic life and finances of the country. These evil effects found expression in a steadily growing dissatisfaction among the lower classes of even the Magyar population. The agrarian socialistic revolts of the years 1898 and 1905, which had to be put down by armed force, took place in purely Magyar comitats. Thus, in the fight for political rights, above all, for universal franchise, part of the Magyar population, which weighted the scales heavily from the numerical standpoint, was allied to the other nationalities of Hungary. They stood shoulder to shoulder in opposition to the ruling parties, one inspired by social and the other by national motives. That was the real line of demarcation. It was drawn not between the Party of '67 and the Party of '48, not between the Government Party and the Opposition in Parliament, but divided the Magyar oligarchy, the squirearchy, and the commercial classes associated with them from all the rest of the Hungarian people. The constitutional and political opposition between the adherents of dualism and the adherents of complete independence existed only within the ruling class represented in the Hungarian Parliament, and signified little more than a comedy to delude people about the real conditions and the essential needs of the country and its peoples. The economist and politician, Dr. Alexander von Peez, admirably characterized the system of Magyar politics in his pamphlet, *Die Aufgaben der Deutschen in Österreich*, which appeared in 1905. These were his words: "In their relation

to the Crown, they pursued the familiar tactics: wild threats from the insatiable Left wing; the vote in danger; the Ministers hurry anxiously off to Vienna, new concessions are obtained. But contentment, equilibrium and peace, these are not attained. Never. The Magyars need perpetual warfare against the Crown, in order to conceal the weaknesses in their ranks, and to divert attention both at home and abroad from their barbarous oppression of the greater part of their own fellow-countrymen."

The political powers in Hungary were perfectly aware that national ideas would lose their magic attraction for the people the instant that material advantage beckoned from another side. They were aware that to the peasant and the lower middle classes land, bread, and taxation were the most important questions, and that, therefore, the Crown possessed the power at any moment to bring the people over to its side and to turn it against the ruling parties. In order to guard against this in advance as far as possible, and to gain a *point d'appui* against the Crown in public sentiment, the political leaders used their powers in every conceivable way, particularly in the schools and in the press, to stir up chauvinism among the Magyar nation by inflaming national passion and by the old "gravaminal" policy,<sup>1</sup> and to aggravate this chauvinism into hatred against Austria and the dynasty. That such a policy found favourable soil in the national sentiment was due to the neglect to establish proper relations between Austria and Hungary. It was a continually repeated error of Vienna policy always to look at things from the Austrian point of view and never simultaneously from the Hungarian point of view. To select only one particularly glaring example from the multitude of similar failures, what sins were committed in the Bach period<sup>2</sup> by calling in Austrian and Czech officials, and by provocative and unsympathetic interference with old privileges and traditional institutions! That period was particularly rich in incidents which could not but irritate Magyar national sentiments to an extreme

<sup>1</sup> This may be defined as the policy of seeking out and denouncing any real or fancied slight on the constitutional rights of Hungary. (Translators' note.)

<sup>2</sup> 1849-59.

degree. When it was added to the Hapsburg dominions in the year 1526, by the election<sup>1</sup> of the Archduke Ferdinand as King of Hungary, Hungary was for Austria a new acquisition, an accession. Austria on the other hand was the original possession of the dynasty. The King of Hungary resided outside the country, he did not speak the language of the people, his immediate entourage, his advisers, were members of other races. Was it surprising that the Hungarian felt a stranger at the court of his king, and felt that he found there no real understanding of his political sentiments and his rights, his peculiar character and his peculiar interests? And in fact this was very often true. It is in this politically eccentric position of Hungary in relation to Austria, which was the result of historical evolution, combined with the pride innate in the Hungarian nation, which could not brook being set on one side, that we may find the key to the psychological evaluation of the sentiments of the Hungarian people towards their ruling house. We may deeply regret, but we can also understand that the aspirations of the Magyars were always directed towards securing or recovering a far-reaching independence as against Austria. These aspirations, it is true, given the hot-blooded national temperament, only too often assumed forms which made the loyalty of the nation appear very questionable, and openly displayed the desire to cut adrift from the hated union with Austria. The history of the relations of Austria to Hungary is in an almost unbroken series of such more or less impetuous attempts to cut adrift. But it is also rich in incidents in which the proud national sentiment of the Magyars came into conflict with the loyalty that was in harmony with their honourable character. The emotional factor often plays a much greater part in politics than the statecraft of the professional politician. It has a greater significance in the history of nations than is ordinarily assumed. The secret of mass inspiration depends on the realization of this truth. This

<sup>1</sup> Even although Ferdinand's claim to the Hungarian Crown was legally based on a previous agreement, the fact must not be overlooked that political right is valid only when it is accompanied by might. In actual fact Ferdinand did not proclaim himself King of Hungary until after the election on 16th December, 1526.

applies to the Magyars in a quite special degree. Thus in two typical cases it was women, Queens of Hungary, who, above all the twists and turns of politics, canalized the emotional factor, and found the direct road to the heart of the Hungarians. When Maria Theresa in the Parliament at Pressburg on 11th September, 1741, spoke to the hearts of the "Mag-nates," and said that she looked for salvation to the loyalty of her Hungarians, at one blow every grievance against the Austrian ruling house was forgotten, and as from one great throat came back the enthusiastic, chivalrous cry, *Moriamur*.<sup>1</sup> The same was true of the Consort of the Emperor Franz Joseph, the Empress Elizabeth. She, too, knew how to canalize the emotional factor. She showed understanding for the Magyar character, she announced that she loved to stay in Hungary, she spoke the Hungarian language, and in all possible ways showed her admiration and love for the Hungarian nation. In this way she won the hearts of the Magyars, and she is still venerated as a saint in Hungary.

Hungary's sentiments towards her ruling house were subject, it is true, to very frequent change. A closer view, however, makes one realize that at bottom the Magyars desired to stand to the Crown in a relation which would have enabled them to reconcile the loyal sentiments in their hearts towards the ruling house with their proud and glowing love for their country. If it had been properly understood what their constitution, sanctified by a thousand-year-old tradition, and the King, as the wearer of the Crown of Saint Stephen, meant to the Magyars,<sup>2</sup> if above all the personal relations of the dynasty

<sup>1</sup> The famous cry, "*Moriamur pro nostro rege, Maria Theresia*." (Translators' note.)

<sup>2</sup> I do not mean to assert that Hungary occupied a special position among the European States in virtue of its Saint Stephen's crown and its "thousand-year-old constitution." There is a lot of romantic trappings about all this. If one looks closer, things appear much more sober and everyday. The doctrine of the "sacred crown" is familiar. Professor Akos von Timon says on the subject: "They [the Hungarian people] on the one hand conceive of the Holy Crown as the sign and symbol of the Hungarian State; on the other, they personify it as the holder of the public authority rooted in the nation and appertaining to the King and the people in the political sense, that is, to the nobles. The public authority is by a mystery present in the Holy Crown." The Crown as the personification of the State is a mode of expression not confined to Hungary; it was, as Professor Luschin von Ebengreuth points out, previously customary

to Hungary had been more intimate, if the proud royal castle at Buda had not always been uninhabited, and if much else had been done to deal properly with the Hungarian national spirit, the Hungarians would certainly never have put national patriotism before their loyalty to the House of Hapsburg.<sup>1</sup>

in other European States, in the Kingdom of Bohemia, for example, with regard to the Sacred Crown of Wenceslas. And as for the "mystery," the Hungarian people did not consistently recognize anything of the kind. What about Ladislaus Posthumus, who was solemnly crowned with the Sacred Crown of Saint Stephen by the Archbishop of Gran at Stuhlweissenburg on 15th May, 1440, and Wladislaw of Poland, who was also crowned King of Hungary with a gold ring at Buda in June, 1440. If the "mystery" of the Crown is taken as the legal basis, then it must—that is the essence of a mystery—be valid in all cases. On this occasion, however, Ladislaus Posthumus was not agreeable to the Hungarian Estates, and so they without more ado deprived the "sacred crown of Saint Stephen" of its "mystery" and transferred the "mystery" to the gold ring with which they crowned the rival king. And what about the notion of the Sacred Crown when the Magyars received with machine gun fire their King Karl, who had been crowned with the Crown of Saint Stephen, when he came to their country in 1921? It appears, therefore, that in Hungary, as in other countries, a very everyday and modern conception of Hungarian constitutional law seems to have taken the place of the old traditional conception, when this was more advantageous. The doctrine of the sacred crown is laid down in the "Tripartitum," a codification of old Hungarian law printed by Verböczy in 1517. Now the "Tripartitum" shows quite clearly that the "thousand-year-old constitution" of Hungary was nothing but a constitution of the Estates, like that which existed in the other Crown lands, Bohemia and all the rest of the Austrian lands. The legislative power was, according to Verböczy, divided between the King and the people (*Volk*), but, also according to Verböczy, the *Volk* meant only the lords, prelates, barons, magnates and nobles, not the "commoners," whom he called the "Plebs," as distinguished from the "*Volk*." Therefore, before 1848, it is as impossible to speak of a form of government in the sense of a real constitution or of constitutional liberties in Hungary as in Bohemia or the other Crown lands.

<sup>1</sup> The Emperor Karl on several occasions discussed this idea at length in conversations with me, and as a definite policy on 10th May, 1917, when Count Burian, in making his evening report, spoke in favour of universal suffrage. He would certainly have been the first of the Hapsburgs to contrive to be King of Hungary in a sense which would have been in harmony with the historic traditions of the old Kingdom and the entirely loyal and honourable desires of Hungary. The Emperor said to me on that occasion that he himself had been guilty of a great blunder by not remaining at least a few weeks in Budapest after the Coronation. He had thought it quite impossible at the time to remain so long away from the Supreme Army Command. After the War Budapest would be a royal residence to the same extent as Vienna already was.



## II

It was obvious that limitation of the rights of the Crown and an approach to an independent Hungarian Army were the chief things to be dealt with if it was desired to prevent the dynasty from having a decisive voice in the struggle between the leading politicians and the people. It was from this point of view that Count Tisza, who, in spite of his many opponents, might be regarded as the spokesman of the Hungarian oligarchy, worked out in the year 1903, when he was Prime Minister, his programme, the programme of the "Committee of Nine." This programme demanded the limitation of the rights of the sovereign, the recognition in principle of an autonomous Hungarian customs area and tariff system, the recognition of Magyar as the official language, and Hungarian flags for the Hungarian regiments of the Imperial and Royal Army with the object of securing an independent Hungarian Army. Legally the direction, command, and internal organization of the Army belonged to the reigning princes and, therefore, were included among the direct rights of the sovereign. That was inconvenient. And so Count Tisza demanded the acknowledgment of the principle that there were no unconditional sovereign rights within the meaning of Hungarian constitutional law, but only such rights as were agreed to by the Hungarian Parliament. On 18th July, 1905, after Tisza's resignation, *Feldzeugmeister* Freiherr Géza von Fejérváry was appointed Prime Minister of Hungary. The idea was to hush up the interminable army questions by proclaiming universal suffrage. The opposition of the deputies to Fejérváry in Parliament was a storm in a teacup; for when the Emperor Franz Joseph, at the famous "five minutes' audience" on 23rd September, 1905, gave the leaders of the Coalition plainly to understand that he was inflexible on the Army question, and when, on 15th February, 1906, the Hungarian Parliament was dissolved and all constitutional discussions and grievances cut short by the appearance of a Hungarian regiment, which ejected the deputies, the politicians united in the "Coalition" were seized with alarm at the now serious threat of the carrying out of the electoral

reforms. So, in order to banish this danger, they decided to abandon for the moment all military demands and to take electoral reform into their own hands, as they believed that this was the only way to prevent, or at least delay, the introduction of universal suffrage. Actually, even the Wekerle Coalition Ministry, which was at the helm of State for three years, up to 17th June, 1910, did not fulfil its promise to carry through the electoral reforms. The elections carried out in 1910 by the Khuen-Héderváry Government, which were really accomplished by force and bribery, brought Count Tisza, who had been robbed of his majority after the downfall of the Liberal Party in the 1905 elections, to the political surface once more. The new or re-elected Liberal deputies joined to form the "National Work" Party, at whose head remained Count Tisza. He had realized for some time that opposition to the Crown in Army questions was not the right method of preventing the threatened electoral reforms. He considered that this end would be better served by winning the confidence of the Emperor Franz Joseph, and in this way safeguarding the leading politicians of Hungary in their ascendancy. He very soon had an opportunity of putting this shrewd design into practice. After Návay retired from his position as President of the House of Deputies, Tisza was elected in his place by a majority of the House. On the 23rd May, 1912, 50,000 workers in Pest held a demonstration in favour of universal suffrage with the threat of a general strike, which led to sanguinary encounters with the police. Then Tisza, at the Session of the Lower House on 4th June, 1912, by means of a drastic application of standing orders, and amid howls of protest from the Opposition, forced through the defence proposals. And when the Prime Minister, Lukács, could not be cleared at the bar of justice of the accusation publicly made against him of misapplying public money for electioneering and party purposes, Tisza was appointed Prime Minister of Hungary on 6th June, 1913. From then onward he was the confidant of the Emperor Franz Joseph. By his bold and confident intervention he cleared the outstanding army questions out of the way, and thus saved the prestige of the Crown in relation to Hungary. Backed up by the confidence of the Emperor, Tisza

became practically an unlimited dictator in Hungary. He was styled the "Uncrowned King of Hungary." His position became unassailable after the assassin's hand had struck down his chief antagonist, the heir-apparent, the Archduke Franz Ferdinand. It would, however, be a great mistake to believe that the Emperor over-estimated Count Tisza. The Archduke Karl said to me again and again that His Majesty found it very difficult to stomach Tisza's brusque, doctrinaire and overbearing ways, and that he did not regard him as a far-seeing statesman, but merely as an energetic and adroit politician, who was necessary for the moment. It was remarkable the lengths to which Tisza would go to secure the continued support of the Crown. At an audience in the autumn of 1914 at Schönbrunn, the Archduke Karl told me that Count Tisza appeared immediately after the tragedy of Sarajevo, offered to report to him on current affairs, and formally interviewed him. "But," added the Archduke, "I only appeared to fall in with his designs. I did not follow his lead on the thorny subject of Uncle Franz's policy. He wanted to know definitely what I thought of it, and whether my uncle had initiated me into it. But he departed not much wiser than he came. Count Stürgkh, on the other hand, did not appear at all." I replied that an Austrian Prime Minister had no need to be so inquisitive; he could wait patiently until he was sent for.

It was due to the cleverness of Count Tisza that Hungarian politics had a peaceful interval. The danger of electoral reform in the shape of the granting of universal suffrage seemed to have been overcome as far as the immediate future was concerned. This apparent success gave Count Tisza the reputation of a distinguished statesman, and at the same time the political prestige of the Opposition, which had demanded universal suffrage purely for tactical reasons, but which was really equally opposed to it on national political grounds, was very greatly reduced. But, as I have said, it was only a pseudo-success; the indignation of the other nationalities at their lack of political rights remained unchanged, in spite of some judicious measures in favour of the use of the German and Rumanian languages in the schools on the part of Jankovics, the Minister for Education. The discontent of the lower

classes of the Magyar population was undiminished; the emigration figures continued, as before, to show a steady increase. During the Főjerváry-Kristóffy interlude, sweeping political and economic reforms had been contemplated, and refused to be ousted by the interposition of constitutional questions, in which the people could no longer get up any interest. It is no discredit to the Hungarian politicians if they held fast to old traditions and conservative institutions; but they ought to have realized that the increasing density of population in Europe necessitated, both as a natural consequence and as a social requirement, rapid development of industrial technique and a strict organization of industry, commerce and capital, that a new world had arisen in which there was no place for constitutional problems of the old style, nor for social and national privilege. The failure to realize this was the fundamental error of Hungarian policy. Her policy was not only anachronistic, it was un-European.

### III

The War silenced all social and national aspirations. The military laws admitted of none but the official policy. As neither the other nationalities nor the great mass of the Magyar working classes were represented in the Hungarian Parliament, only the privileged politicians of Hungary, under the leadership of Tisza, the "uncrowned king," had any voice in affairs.

In order to understand the policy pursued by the Hungarians during the War, one fact must be particularly borne in mind, the fact that they found not only moral but practical support for their aspirations from the Germans of the German Empire. It is well known that there were two main schools of thought in Germany in the matter of war aims. The one, the judiciously moderate and statesmanlike school, was represented by the German Emperor and by Bethmann Hollweg; its distinguishing character was disinclination for extensive annexations. The other and opposed school of thought was

represented by the German military party; this was the one which predominated among the population and also, in the year 1916, in the Reichstag, and it desired extensive annexations. It was the school of the Pan-Germans, the victory peace party, the Fatherland party, the capitalists and the iron and steel magnates. Many of the adherents of this latter school held the view that the historical development of Central Europe led up naturally to an enlarged German Empire with two subsidiary countries, Hungary and Poland. Even if a view of this kind could not find political expression, and would not have stood the test of serious examination from the German standpoint, nevertheless, it at least afforded proof of the existence of an unofficial opinion calculated to encourage the Magyars in their chauvinistic desires and make co-operation with the German Empire under all circumstances appear to be the sound policy, particularly in connection with their aim of cutting entirely adrift from their union with Austria. The moderate opinion represented in the German Empire by the Federal Chancellor was not so ready to throw overboard the pragmatism of Austria-Hungary; but it is undeniable that, even among the representatives of this moderate opinion, a certain anxiety obtained whether Austria would be able to bring about an internal political situation which would afford a guarantee for a future prosperous development of the Monarchy as a whole. There was not even the outline visible of any scheme for the reorganization of the internal affairs of the Monarchy, which naturally gave sustenance to the extreme view. The picture that Berlin had formed of Central Europe was entirely in accordance with the wishes of the Magyars in their struggle for independence: Hungary should extend towards the south-east, take over the mission which had belonged to the old Monarchy and receive complete independence. The most far-flung aspirations of the Magyars were thus in harmony with the aims of an extreme trend of thought in Germany, which, although not official, did exist. The danger to the Monarchy thus did not lie in German support of Hungarian ambitions, but in the hankerings after separation of the Magyar chauvinists, which found sustenance in an unofficial tendency in Germany that was more friendly to Hungary than to Austria. This tendency

had a quite natural explanation in the fact that, while Germany estimated the political ascendancy of Hungary in relation to Austria quite correctly, in ignorance of the facts, she believed that in Hungary she had to do with a solid united State. Only by measures which, without regard to the separatist aspirations of the Magyars and the opinion of Berlin, were directed towards the strengthening of the pragmatic conception of unity, would it have been possible to make Germany realize that the Danube Monarchy still possessed the power to maintain itself and to bring to nought all efforts aimed at setting aside its vital interests.

A glaring light is thrown on the attempts of the Magyars to secure German help for their defection from Austria by a little pamphlet, which appeared in 1915, written by one Karl von Cserny, a member of the Hungarian Parliament and entitled "German-Hungarian Relations." The pamphlet was introduced by a preface from the pen of the then Prime Minister, Count Tisza, and thus bears the stamp of semi-official propaganda. The preface is worth reading. At the very beginning comes the remarkable sentence: "Nearly a thousand years ago Hungary made her choice between West and East, and began her almost unbroken fight for the security and freedom of the West." This somewhat audacious statement is intended to convey the impression that the Magyars had been the friends of the Germans from their first appearance on the stage of history. The preface goes on to refer to the blood which the Magyar nation, in its position of outpost, has shed "in the fight" against the enemies of Germany, and to its susceptibility to German culture, "towards the spread of which it had done so much,"<sup>1</sup> and finally

<sup>1</sup> How does this tally with the fact that the number of German elementary schools fell from 1,200 in the years 1868-1896, that the Royal Hungarian Minister Wlassits, in his official report, referred to this as a very gratifying circumstance, that this same Wlassits deleted the German language from the curriculum of the secondary schools, that, when the Budapest German theatre was burned down, a Hungarian deputy said in a public sitting of Parliament: "It is to the help of God that we owe the burning down of the German theatre," that another Hungarian deputy declared at the same sitting: "German culture is a danger to Hungary"? How does this assertion of Count Tisza's tally with the songs of Erdő Ernős, "Black Souls of the Dishonourable Germans," or the popular song, "By the German Cur," or the song of the great Hungarian poet Petőfi (more

to the fact that "in the great struggle of the nations, it had always consciously endeavoured to secure its future by the side of Germany."

Everyone who is acquainted with the history of Hungary knows that when, a thousand years ago, they "made their choice between East and West," the Magyars were making raids upon and robbing and plundering the West, that is, Germany and the German centres of culture,<sup>1</sup> and that they, in the further course of history, however they performed their rôle in the fight against the Turks, who alone can be meant as "the enemies of Germany," also extolled as champions of the interests of the Magyar nation Magyars who fought against Austria and against German troops on the side of their correctly Petrović), "Carion on the Body of the Noble Magyars"? If German culture meant so much to the Magyars, why did Count Alexander Teleki, a member of the Table of Magnates, apostrophize the Germans in the *Magyar Polgar*, a paper friendly to the Government, in the following amiable terms: "We have one foe, a foe who is as the vulture to the dove, itch to the skin, scurf to the head . . . our tyrant, our exploiter, our devastator, who is for us at once louse, bug and phylloxera, and this foe is—the German"? Why did the *Magyarország*, at the time when Wlassits deleted German from the curriculum of the Magyar secondary schools, write an article in which the following sentences occurred: "In a large part of Hungary children do not understand a word of German when they first go to school. Even in Budapest comparatively few people understand German. Thank Heaven for this! . . . The national spirit demands . . . that the compulsory study of the German language should be omitted from the school time-table. . . . Let us not corrupt the Magyar mind with a foreign tongue, which is a dead weight to the pupil and a disturbing factor in the whole of our national civilization"? (Wastian, *Ungarns Tausendjährig*). The number of examples of the "spread of German culture" by the Magyars could be multiplied indefinitely.

To be historically correct, Count Tisza should have expressed himself somewhat as follows: "The Magyars owe their civilization almost entirely to the Germans." German civilization and German intellectual life needed no support from the Magyars, as it spread naturally wherever it had an opportunity to develop.

These fights and forays are of course in close historical connection with the existing state of confusion among the Germans, who, being divided among themselves, offered opportunity for and incitement to such plundering expeditions. Far be it from me to moralize and represent these forays as monstrous deeds. All historical events must be judged and understood in the light of the period in which they were enacted. But people cannot be allowed to falsify history and to assert the exact opposite of what actually occurred, merely because such a misrepresentation happens to suit the political huckstering of the moment.

enemies, on the side of the Turks. I am thinking of Rákoczy, who conspired against the Hapsburgs with the then arch-enemies of Austria, France and the Turks, and Tököly, who smoothed the way to Vienna for the Turks.

Although the motive behind this union of Hungary with the Turks against Austria can readily be understood from a national Hungarian point of view, this does not alter the historical fact that the Magyars were never so hostile to the Turks as to the Germans.<sup>1</sup>

In the years 1859 and 1866 a few Magyars disclosed their feelings towards Germany. They believed that they could best further their release from their partnership with Austria and from the hated Hapsburg dynasty with the help of Germany, as they had formerly hoped to do with the help of Turkey. Take Kossuth, for example. It is true that not all Hungarians were his adherents. The annihilating verdict which Bartholomäus von Szemere and Count Stefan Széchenyi passed on Kossuth is well known.<sup>2</sup> Deák, too, talked of the "bound-

<sup>1</sup> Although I state this quite plainly, no Magyar can deduce anti-Hungarian sentiments from it; for it was the Hungarian conception which the Hungarian Minister for Religion and Education was anxious to preserve and spread among the younger generation. In a reader approved as a school-book by this Ministry, and written by one Alexius Benedek on the commission of this Ministry, *Historische Lesestücke* (Budapest, Franklinverein, 1909), the following sentence occurs: "The German was a far more dangerous enemy than the Turk." This reader also affords further abundant material to prove that the youth of Hungary was being systematically trained up to megalomania and hatred of the ruling house.

<sup>2</sup> "Although you regarded yourself as a prophet, you not only foresaw nothing, but you could not even grasp clearly the simplest events as they happened, and while you lulled your mind with the illusions of being a creator, you were nothing but a mover of resolutions and a maker of schemes, who began everything, who led the credulous into all sorts of wild plans, who could perhaps for a little while keep up one attitude or another, but could bring nothing to completion. You tried to lead others, but you were unable to rule yourself.

"You took yourself for a new political Messiah, a profound statesman, but you were unable to rise above the standpoint of a kind and compassionate brother, who liked to put balm on every wound. You were terribly inclined to *laissez-faire*. You had perhaps talent enough to found a national hospital, but not to regenerate a nation hastening to ruin. . . .

"In imagining that you were sent to make the nations happy, you were only like a pettifogging lawyer, you were, to our misfortune, a demagogue who led them astray, in imagining that you could change and consolidate



less ambition " of Kossuth, and of his " lack of judgment as the cause of Hungary's misfortune." Nor is it correct to infer from the hostile attitude of Kossuth and his political associates to Austria and the dynasty similar hostile sentiments in the Magyars as a whole. But the inference is permissible in the case of those Magyars for whom Kossuth became a celebrated national hero.

In the year 1859, great hopes were cherished in Hungary of the ruin of Austria. At that time Hungarians were negotiating with the enemy. Kossuth sent an appeal to the Hungarian regiments urging them to break their oath of allegiance. A Hungarian Legion,<sup>1</sup> the famous " Klapka Legion," was formed, the commander of which issued a proclamation from Genoa on 20th May, 1859, in which the following sentence occurred: " We beg, we order you, O heroes, if you meet with French or Italian troops, not to hesitate to go over to them,<sup>2</sup> and to flock all the earlier to the banner of the Hungarian Army in Italy, which will save the Fatherland."

These were the earliest beginnings of a junction between the Magyars and the Germans. At first, this applied only to the Prussians, as the then enemies of Austria. But it would be a great mistake to make any general inference about the orientation of the Magyars at that time from these historical data. Kossuth's following among the Hungarian nobility was more or less restricted to the small landed gentry. The attitude of the Magnates to Kossuth's ideas, with not unimportant exceptions, was one of repudiation or at least reserve. Moreover, it must be specially emphasized that the national chauvinism, which was characterized by hostility to Austria and the Hapsburgs, was pursued, not so much by the pure-blooded Magyars as, and that in its most extreme and per-

the institutions of our country, you involved it in utter confusion; instead of spreading freedom, which was your idol, you plunged the country into even greater serfdom. . . ." (Quoted from Ninold, *Kossuth-kultus*, pages 92 *et seq.*, and Sosnosky, *Die Politik im Habsburgerreiche*, pages 62 *et seq.*)

<sup>1</sup> The forerunner and prototype of the Czechoslovak Legion.

<sup>2</sup> In the year 1896 a monument was erected at Komorn to the traitor Klapka, who in any case was by origin a Czech. Stefanik and Mazaryk, like Klapka, also negotiated with the enemy, and from " national motives " founded a Czechoslovak Legion, as Klapka had founded his Hungarian Legion. But if the Monarchy had been preserved, would the authorities have tolerated the erection of monuments to them in Bohemia? •

icious forms, by renegades, Magyarized Germans, Slavs, and Jews. It was perfectly revolting to see families of pure German origin entirely forgetting their kinship with the Germans, and, far in excess of their obligations as citizens of Hungary, giving a Magyar twist to their good German names, out-Magyarizing the Magyars, and, in their jingo enthusiasm for an alien nation, far exceeding the genuine Magyars themselves. Magyars would never have been guilty of such baseness towards their own race. They would have been ashamed to act in this way. I will once again emphatically repeat what I have already said in my preface, that I have always regarded the Magyar nation, that is, the genuine Magyars by blood and name, as one of the best elements in the population of the Hapsburg Monarchy, and as a people of the most honourable character, even if, for this very reason, often of a rebellious disposition. The Magyars, like many other peoples, have always had the disposition of the ruler, not of the ruled. The courage of one's convictions, rebellion against real or ostensible injustice, and independence of judgment are all traits of an honourable character. I am very proud that, on my mother's side, I have in my veins Magyar blood of the most noble families, the Sennyey, the Széchenyi, the Inkey and Szegedy, and the old Széchy and Gyöngyös, and that, on my father's side, I am descended from a daughter of the Arpads, Saint Elizabeth of Thuringia. I am too conscious of the warm tide of rebel blood in myself not to understand its workings in the Magyar people.

Although I looked upon, and still look upon, Magyar policy as fatal to the Hapsburg Empire, from an impartial point of view, the greatest esteem must be paid to the Magyar nation, for it is, with certain exceptions, of course, in spite of all its vanity and arrogance, its insurgent nature, which frequently betrayed it into treason, and its often infuriating egotism, nevertheless incapable of a base attitude of mind. In this it is in sharp contrast to the Magyarized and Magyar-aping members of other nations and races in Hungary, who exploit the vanity of the Magyars as a useful weapon for their own political climbing to the detriment of autochthonous and pure-blooded Magyars. The Transylvanian Saxon, Adolf Zay, characterized these renegades very aptly in a sitting of

Parliament on 29th April, 1879, in the following words: "The makers of public opinion and its terrorism, the people who almost entirely control politics in Hungary to-day, and even give a peculiar *haut goût* to the whole of the public life of Hungary, are not recruited from the Magyar race. They deny their origin, because they do not wish to share the fate of citizens of the second class; they attach themselves with a certain officiousness to the ruling race and transfer themselves to its ranks with a certain avidity and boldness in order to indulge their morbid ambition and greed of gain. They make a speculation of patriotism, vie with each other in pharisaical devotion to the State, and made a trade of abusing anyone who does not belong to their gang or sit in the seats of the mighty. Can you, fellow members, fathers of the Fatherland, afford to let such people, who have brought egoism and lack of character into the ranks of the Magyars, exercise a decisive influence on the direction of the fate of our country? Can you afford to let such political adventurers disloyally falsify the historical character of the Hungarian State, and, in order to attain their own selfish ends, drive it into paths which cannot now or ever bring it to salvation?"

The Jews, too, gave a strong impetus to the chauvinistic Magyar policy, and thus contrived to secure great influence in public affairs. On the position of the Jews in Hungary, Paul Samassa writes as follows in his book, *Der Völkerstreit im Hapsburgerstaat*: "But it (anti-semitism) was no longer a match for the power which Israel had won. The liberal professions, medicine, law, and especially journalism, offered rich opportunities of activity to the Jews. The strengthening of economic and the revival of political life created a great demand for barristers; from there it was an easy step to Parliament. In the 1906 elections 32 Jewish barristers, who had joined the Kossuth Party, defeated an equal number of candidates of pure Magyar stock; and as politics and business are here bound up with material interests, it is characteristic that, after the election, no fewer than 164 actions were brought for distraint upon the salaries of deputies. Many a Magyar may gnash his teeth over all this, but he can only do it in secret. For the position of the Jews is already so secure, and they are already so closely allied with the ruling political

caste, that any attempt to dislodge them would be useless. Although the Jews had as little leaning to Magyar nationalism as to any other sort, it was the strongest power in the land. And the agitations of anti-semitism, which were considerable under the Magyars, made it appear desirable to deflect political interest from economic questions, which was easy with the aid of the press, which was at their orders. Since this question in itself is a matter of indifference to the Jews, and they merely consider it their interest to feed the flame of Magyar nationalism as high as possible, the boundless extravagance of the manner customary in the Magyar press on this subject is self-explanatory."

And it was precisely the press, in which the Magyar people hardly took any active interest, but which steeped their minds year in year out with jingoistic poison, which, in conjunction with the renegades busy in the front ranks everywhere, brought to a head the reckless nationalistic political extravagances which ultimately made it impossible for the Magyars to live with other nationalities.

The German alliance made the inclination towards the German Empire more general in Hungary. It had acquired an official character and received dynastic sanction, and was doubly advantageous to the Magyars: in the first place, it created for them an assured position in relation to the smaller nationalities, and, secondly, it afforded a possibility of politically approaching closer and closer to the Hohenzollerns,<sup>1</sup> always under the protection of the official policy of the Monarchy, and of making sure of their help in all events, in order ultimately to reach the goal of their endeavours, when the hated Austria would be crushed between Pan-Germany and Hungary as between the upper and the nether millstones.

There was, of course, no lack of "extra turns" in Hungary. One of these was given by Count Michael Károlyi. His was the one that has been played over and over again in the history of Hungary; the impulse of some Magyar lords to unite with the enemies of Austria and to yoke the national

<sup>1</sup> In Hungary during the War the legend was already circulating that Eitel Friedrich of Prussia was to be King of Hungary. It was the wish of a large part of the Magyars. As a preliminary the name Eitel had to be given a historically Magyar appearance, and was translated into "Atila."

chauvinistic spirit in the service of their often very personal ambitions. By this means they always succeeded in winning the red-white-and-green halo of the Magyar national heroes. Tisza stood politically on a higher level. He was intelligent enough to know that the Pan-Germans were the real enemies of the Hapsburg Empire, and that a policy of a gradual *rapprochement* with Germany, especially protestant North Germany, was the more likely to further his aims, especially as it could be pursued on the protecting platform of the official alliance policy. Károlyi was a dilettante. He placed himself on the side of the official enemies of the Monarchy, and hoped to reach his goal with the aid of the Entente and American money. But, being more up-to-date than Tisza, he relied not so much on the national as on the social element, partly because he could not do without it in view of the grouping of forces, and partly because he had no prospect of winning the sympathy of the Entente and America unless he took his stand on equal rights for all nationalities and a democratic franchise. He had no need to be anxious about the national cause once the independence of Hungary and its liberation from the Hapsburg dynasty, the dream of so many Hungarian national leaders, had been attained. Károlyi, however, had not the luck of his predecessors: for the dream of independence was realized under his hands, as an automatic result of the loss of the War, and without his having contributed one single statesmanlike act towards it. But at the same moment the powerlessness of an independent Hungary was revealed: it collapsed, nay, it attained its independence only through the secession of all the nationalities with which it had formerly been united. And Károlyi was done out of figuring as a national hero. The halo of the hero never encircled his head. The nation branded on his brow the mark of the traitor.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Károlyi visited me at my office in Vienna soon after the fall of Tisza. He asked me to arrange an audience with His Majesty and unfolded his ideas to me. I learned from him a great deal which it was valuable to me to know. The chief thing was that it afforded me an opportunity of becoming acquainted with him and his range of ideas. The result was that I kept the Emperor's door shut against him. It was opened to him by other hands. I warned the Emperor against him repeatedly, in spite of the fact that he had ranged himself on the Emperor's side on the franchise

But it would be erroneous to believe that the Party of Independence was alone in aiming at severance of the partnership between Austria and Hungary. All the leading Hungarian politicians, moderate as well as radical, were inspired by the same idea. If the former declared the Compromise of 1867 to be the immovable foundation, it was because they regarded this constitutional structure as more adapted to turn to effective use Hungary's position of dominance in relation to Austria, and to pave the way for complete independence. Count Tisza was, as it were, a Menshevik, Count Károlyi a Bolshevik.

#### IV

By adherence to the Compromise of 1867, all idea of the possibility of a different constitutional structure, which made a trialistic form of Government or the resuscitation of the Imperial idea float threateningly before Magyar eyes, was driven from the field. Thus the point of view of the Party of '67 was, as it were, an assured support in an offensive position. The change in the emblems of State was symptomatic of this. It was regarded as a reward for the efficiency of the Hungarian troops in the War. The juxtaposition of the arms of Austria and Hungary, which were only loosely connected by the interposed escutcheon of the dynasty, showed in a truly unmistakable manner the goal towards which the Hungarians were striving. Apart from the motto, which had merely a subsidiary significance in the coat of arms, they were the unambiguous emblems of a personal union. It is significant, also, that the Prime Minister, Count Tisza, when it was a question, at the time of the settling the arms question, of finding a place for the arms of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Austria had proposed to place their arms between those of question. For I had become convinced that he had done this not out of regard for the Crown, but in order to play the part of a political leader himself. That was plain as day. Some of his political friends appealed to me again later—I myself never saw him again—and always referred to his attitude on the franchise question. I informed the Emperor of this, but maintained a passive attitude myself, merely repeating my warnings.

Austria and Hungary, declared that, from the Hungarian side, he must reject anything that contained even the suggestion of a trialistic combination of States.<sup>1</sup> He put forward a counter-proposal that the arms of Bosnia should be inserted both in the Austrian and the Hungarian arms, and this proposal was actually accepted. The ensuing alteration of the heraldic emblems, which would only have been justified as the final act of a preceding constitutional organization, was prejudicial to the Hungarian aim, not yet attained, of creating a personal union. Also, because it lacked all constitutional foundation, it had nothing but a symptomatic significance. The movement, however, showed the goal of the policy of Hungary, and further afforded proof of how well Count Tisza knew how to turn to account the efficiency and success of the Hungarian troops and the impotence of the Vienna Cabinet, in order to consolidate his own position in the country. His policy, as anyone with eyes could see, aimed at weakening the political position of Austria against the end of the War, in order to diminish the opposition to the attainment of Hungarian desires and ambitions at or after the conclusion of Peace.

And what was the attitude of Austrian statesmen and politicians to the Hungarian pretensions to power? Most of them withdrew in advance as from a matter of no significance, because they did not know Hungary at all. Dr. von Koerber<sup>2</sup> was one of the few who correctly estimated the menace of Magyar policy. But on account of his critical rather than

<sup>1</sup> The extreme sensitiveness of the Hungarian leaders with regard to incidents which might appear even to hint at an orientation on the lines of federalism or imperial unity, is shown by the following episode. When the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, in 1902, was to go to London to represent the Emperor at the Coronation festivities, the following four gentlemen were chosen as gentlemen-in-waiting: Prince Heinrich Liechtenstein, Prince Sapieha, Count Bouquoy, and Count Festetics. This purely chance selection of a German, a Pole, a Czech, and a Hungarian immediately aroused distrust and agitation in Hungary. The heir-apparent was violently attacked, and only a solemn declaration in the Hungarian *Official Gazette* to the effect that there had been no thought of a federalistic grouping in the choice of the gentlemen-in-waiting, restored calm in the ranks of Hungarian politicians.

<sup>2</sup> Austrian Prime Minister 1900-1904, and in 1916 after the murder of Stürgkh.

constructive spirit, he could not nerve himself to any statesmanlike action. In the year 1912, on the occasion of a call I paid on Koerber, he spoke of Hungary. He put the blame for Austria's political dependence on Hungary on the Emperor's fear of the Magyar "gravaminal policy" and his reluctance to disturb the existing constitutional structure. Koerber saw quite clearly the evil which threatened the Monarchy from without on account of the Hungarian customs policy directed against Serbia and Rumania. He believed in the possibility of a change for the better when the Archduke Franz Ferdinand came to the Throne and could put his views into practice, but he also expressed doubts in this direction. He found the idea of trialism open to objections, but admitted that it would solve at least one and that perhaps the most difficult question. "But," he added, "it is unthinkable that the Emperor would let himself be drawn into a fight with Hungary."

On the whole it is not unjust to say that the Austrian statesmen lacked courage to oppose Hungary's policy of force, because they had not taken the trouble thoroughly to investigate the problem of "Hungary"; for this reason they were unsure in judgment and, if the expression may be permitted, were always falling into the trap of the Hungarian lords. They lacked courage because they took the sham power of the Magyar politicians and their last leader, Count Tisza, for real power, and did not realize that the official Hungary represented by the Pest "Nationalkasino" and the "Gentry-Klub" was an edifice of very questionable solidity, which would have collapsed at the first assault.

The Magyar politicians ruled a country of fifty million inhabitants by the power of suggestion, the suggestion of Hungary, always alive, and always on the spot, in contrast to an Austria doomed to slumber. It was a suggestion which influenced not only the leading statesmen, but public opinion also to a large extent. People felt powerless against Hungary, and resigned themselves far too easily to the idea that, after the War, Austria was condemned to even greater dependence on Hungary. This state of helpless resignation which could be observed in Austria in the early years of the War and the last years of the reign of the Emperor Franz Joseph afforded little hope of a satisfactory issue. One would imagine that



it must have been self-evident to every politician that the World War, the causal roots of which had their ultimate ramifications deep in the history of the nations and the formation of States, and also in universal economic and social conditions, would have far-reaching and profound results. It was amazing how often in Austria, even among politicians of repute, nay, especially among them, one encountered the opinion that, after the War, there would in general be a return to the situation which existed before the War, and that in Austria there would be little change in political conditions. The wish may well have been father to the thought, the wish to remain undisturbed in the comfortable old groove to which they were accustomed, and also to stick to what they had personally won in political life, not to see the goal postponed to a distant future, but rather to be able to resume political ideas and ambitions, especially those of a personal nature, at the point where they had been rudely and unpleasantly broken off by the outbreak of War. A further explanation of the prevalence of this view may also lie in the fact that Austrian statesmen of the last decades before the War had not passed through a good school. Forced into a bed of Procrustes, they had to stifle any broader or deeper ideas in embryo, because they saw immediately that in existing conditions, from which no way of escape could be seen, they were impracticable and could therefore have nothing but a Platonic significance. Hence originated that arrogant, sceptical, nihilistic bent of mind, which regarded with contemptuous pity every natural impulse, which became so typical of Austrian statesmen of repute. Of all great political ideas one only could be regarded as practicable, shrewd, substantial, and worthy of consideration, Taaffe's notion of "muddling along," "going on making sausages." That was the Alpha and Omega of Austrian statecraft. The outsider laughed at it, the shrewd statesman smiled resignedly and acted accordingly. Austria was content: a witty expression had been found for a melancholy fact. But did anyone reflect that in this notion lay the resignation of the dying, and that putting it into practice passed sentence of death on our country?

Nothing could have been more erroneous than to accept this view of a return to old conditions as correct, and nothing

could have been more wrong-headed than to remain inactive as a result of this view. One thing people should have seen even then, that this War, which called for the utmost sacrifices from the people, would certainly have one result, namely, that this pitiable policy of timidity, inconsequence, and poverty of action would come to an end. People must have been bound to say to themselves that a temper was being roused in the population which might easily explode in a catastrophic fashion, if the same wire-pullers with their tricks of Government, of which everybody was so sick, were still at the job. They must have said to themselves that a lack of constructive ideas and a feeble attitude on the part of the Government towards the prevailing intellectual and spiritual anarchy would produce an inextricable political chaos on the conclusion of peace. They must have said to themselves that all the unsolved questions which swayed the political scene in Austria before the outbreak of War would give rise to disaster, unless statesmen made up their minds to draw from the War conclusions commensurate with the political passions it had let loose, and the sacrifices it had exacted from the nation. They must have been convinced that the war between the nations at home urgently demanded great reforms as its logical conclusion. The people and the politicians should have been shown new and clear aims and been given new tasks, so that they could forget all the rubbish on which they had formerly wasted their powers. The Government should have made its aims perfectly clear, and made the world realize that they were inflexibly determined to reach these aims by a ruthlessly straight road. In a word, the Government should not have been content with negations, but should have produced a clear and constructive programme.

But there was no thought of this. And because the Government had no programme, they were opposed to the summoning of the Reichsrat. They may well have felt that the Reichsrat would present a picture of internal instability, of incipient disruption, unless it had an assured programme of positive ideas to guide it. Thus at the very time when all the forces of the Empire should have been united in a common task, Austria lacked parliamentary representation and political work: the Government was without a policy, the people

without leadership, without enlightenment, and without hope.

Austria had ceased to guide her own destiny. The political arena was deserted. Austria slept. Germany and Hungary assumed the leadership. And simultaneously the enemies of Austria were working for her destruction, and ran the whole gamut of hostile propaganda.

On account of the total misconception of the conditions of our Monarchy among those in authority in Germany, their leadership could not but be absolutely fatal. And, in spite of the Emperor Karl's desperate attempts to extricate himself and his country from this *impasse*, Austria remained under this leadership right up to its disruption.

## V

Although, as I have already said, up to the outbreak of War no avowed ascendancy of the Germans existed in Austria, all this was changed the moment the War began. That was, of course, only natural, as we were waging war by the side of our great ally, Germany. Bethmann Hollweg made the great blunder when he spoke of "a fight to the finish between Germans (*Germanen*) and Slavs." In these words he gave open expression to the opinion of the great indiscriminating herd. It was for this reason that his phrase unfortunately met with such great response, and, coming from an authoritative source, threw everything out of gear, and had a most provocative effect on both parties, the Germans and the Slavs. It was the first step towards the dismemberment of the Monarchy, the goal of our enemies. The high military commands, with a patriotism certainly quite honourably intentioned, immediately made their dispositions in accordance with the slogan, "War of the Germans against the Slavs," and had the power to give practical expression to their dispositions. The harm done by military justice in the War is absolutely incalculable. To know, weigh and correctly estimate the driving forces, the currents and political trends in the former

Austro-Hungarian Monarchy required not only a high degree of historical and political knowledge, but also a high degree of experience and political capacity. This was true of the Monarchy to a greater extent than of any other European State. To find one's way about without hopelessly ravelling the fine, criss-crossing political threads that stretched in all directions, called for skilful hands. The superficial political knowledge and the often very erroneous political views of the average general and the average member of the general staff—there were many exceptions whom I exempt from the opinion I formed of the average—was glaringly disproportionate to the power they wielded in the War, and which had been unhesitatingly made over to them.

To quote one example. In the summer of 1917 I happened to have a conversation with an influential general at Reichenau, on the way from the imperial villa in the Annahof, where the Private Office was located. I no longer recall how he came to speak of the slowness of the political authorities, and deliver himself of the following remarks: "Well, everything goes at a more rapid pace now. In peace time, when, for example, a bridge was wanted somewhere, there were so many documents, so many commissions, so much litigation on the subject that there was soon a fat docket about it all, but of the bridge not a sign. We soldiers manage things much more simply. When we see that a bridge is wanted, we build, we don't write. And the bridge is built over night. Everything goes better like that. We have made up in the War for much of the procrastination and time-wasting of the political authorities." I could not help replying: "If the political authorities had had at their disposal an infinitesimal fraction of the money, material and human labour that the Army now have at their unlimited command, I can assure you all the bridges required in the Empire would have been built equally quickly, and probably more economically. But, perhaps, with the money the War is costing, it would have been possible to avoid the War altogether."

At the beginning of the War Austrian patriotism, to the amazement of a great many people, was displayed by all the nationalities and by all classes of the population. It should have been carefully guarded as a most precious possession.

It was military justice which destroyed it. From the outset, the military authorities saw a traitor or an enemy in every Czech, every Serb, every Pole, and every Ruthenian. There began those senseless persecutions by means of which, aided by the supineness of the Government, the secession of the non-Germans in Austria was slowly but systematically effected. The Slavs whose sentiments were Austrian—and there were a large number of them—were forcibly driven into the camp of traitors and enemies. Not content with the number of their external enemies, the authorities tried to create further enemies at home. This policy found strong support in the Pan-German trend which had gained the ascendant in the German Supreme Command. It requires no exhaustive discussion to prove that the Pan-German tendency was irreconcilable with the Austrian State idea. Since its object was to unite the Germans in our country with those of the German Empire, it denied Austria. Even although from a theoretically national point of view it is impossible to deny that the attempt to unite all Germans was not without justification, nevertheless, Austria was bound to condemn Pan-Germanism along with all other irredentist schools of thought. And for the overwhelming majority of the peoples of the old Danube Monarchy the Austrian and dynastic point of view was not "an affair of the stomach," to which level Count Czernin tried to reduce all patriotism, but an affair of the heart.

It would, however, be a great mistake to seek the motives to which the Pan-German school owed its origin exclusively in national sentiments. The national idea was to a large extent rooted in the effort to extend commercial and financial opportunities. True patriotism, love for the soil, love for the character and spiritual possessions of the race to which one belongs, love for home and one's native valley, had long been thrown on the antiquarian rubbish heap by those who with their rationalistic and materialistic attitude to life regard themselves as representative of modern humanity and pose as its leaders. Interests of a very material kind were important motives in "greater national" and "all-national" ambitions. And so were they in the Pan-German school. It would be easy to produce innumerable passages from nationalist literature to illustrate this. I will confine myself to a few charac-

teristic examples, and will first call attention to the standard Pan-German work, the *Deutsche Politik* of Professor Ernst Hasse, a former president of the Pan-German League. A perusal of the several volumes of this work is very instructive to anyone investigating Pan-German mentality. Hasse advocates a Central European customs union to consist of Germany, Austria, Hungary, Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, and Rumania. Turkey should be attached to the German Empire, and a part of China large enough to provide several hundred million permanent customers for the products of German industry. The author points out that England has excluded all foreign influence from her sphere of power; Germany must adopt the same attitude. Nor, if the worst comes to the worst, must German world policy shrink from the application of force to other civilized nations. Kurt von Winterstetten, the pen name of Dr. Albert Ritter, the secretary of the Pan-German League, known as the author of the widely circulated pamphlet, *Berlin-Bagdad*, expresses himself in the following terms: "Austria-Hungary should be attached to the German Empire in a new form as a federal State. The thing to be aimed at is the transformation of the Triple Alliance from an insurance society into a co-operative society." Thus the independence and the national mission of the Danube Monarchy were to be sacrificed to Pan-German material interests. W. Frymann also speaks very plainly in his *Kaiserbuch*, also a Pan-German propagandist document, the real title of which is *Wenn ich Kaiser wäre* (If I were Kaiser). In it an "active, may we say, quietly aggressive foreign policy," is recommended as a "most urgent necessity"; the German Emperor is reproached with weakness and an unworthy desire for peace. The safety of Germany demands that France shall be smashed; in particular, it will be necessary to make large transfers of territory and evacuate the population. Belgium and Holland have forfeited their right to independent existence, and must be attached to the German Empire. With regard to Austria-Hungary, he calls for a dictatorship, which will depend on the Germans and will drive Slavs and Hungarians in pair.

Finally, out of the great mass of Pan-German propagandist literature, I must mention a broad-sheet which appeared in

1900, published by the "German National" publishing house, "Odin," at Munich, and entitled *Die deutsche Politik der Zukunft*. It unfolds its programme with the utmost candour: German troops must march on Bohemia and Upper Austria; Austria must be conquered by Germany and the Imperial Crown transferred to the Hohenzollerns. The German Emperor would at first exercise unlimited authority in Austria through the agency of officials, whom he would choose from the Austrian population at his own discretion. It is, says the author, self-evident that he must renounce the assistance of the nobility and even the clergy, and "turn to the men who have proved their German sentiments in difficulty and storm, have preserved their purity of character and learnt the ruthlessness of a steel-hard national will." With regard to the danger that the souls of Prussian bureaucrats might be overcome by any generous impulse, let it be said that Wolf and Schönerer must be the Imperial Viceroys, or, if they fall on the field of battle [*sic*!] successors of like mind. Austria will then be "germanized by the most ruthless means," with the exception of the Czech districts of Bohemia, which will be transformed into a kind of prison for the Czechs.

Well, well, an oppressed Pan-German soul gave free vent to its feelings in this pamphlet. There are truly strange oddities on this earth. There might be nothing more to it. But the fact that this pamphlet, got up for wide circulation (a thousand copies cost 100 marks), which is full of vile attacks on our ruling house, was allowed to circulate unchecked in Germany, seems to show little regard for her allies.

If we keep in mind that the Pan-Germans had the leading part in the German Army Command during the War, and that their power increased the instant the political barometer rose as a result of military successes, it will be clear to every intelligent observer that a victory of the Central Powers and the realization of Pan-German aims would not only have transformed into its exact reverse the principle of equal rights for all nationalities, the fundamental condition of the continued existence of the Hapsburg Empire, but would have permanently deprived the Monarchy of its independence. It was natural that the Slavs should ask themselves why they should go on fighting, and what Austria meant to them if the

victory of Austria was to result in their overthrow and the loss of their national rights. The Pan-Germans made no secret of the fact that this was what would happen. Can one go on wondering and being revolted at Slav treachery and Slav lack of enthusiasm for the War? I deeply regretted and deplored the secession of the Czechs and the Yugoslavs, all the more because I was, and still am, firmly convinced that it might have been checked. But the only thing I wondered at was the fact that, in spite of our deplorable policy, so many Slavs fought bravely to the last, and that, although the struggle was being waged not in the interest of their nation, but in that of their enemies, the Germans and Magyars, they remained loyal to the Austrian flag. And there were many Slavs both in the trenches and in political life who fought for *Austria*, and for Austria alone. When I realized that, I believed that the defection of the Slavs could have been checked. Unfortunately, no one in the Government understood how to give support to these Austrophile Slavs. They were slowly forced, step by step, man by man, into the ranks of enemies and traitors. It was a fatal error to make treachery excusable on the grounds of national duty.

The Pan-Germans pleaded national sentiment in extenuation of their attitude. Very well. Let us leave out of account the interests of the Hapsburg Empire and the interests involved in the preservation of the economic autarchy of the Danube countries. Let us look at the matter entirely from the Pan-German standpoint, and try to discover whether their attitude was wise even from that standpoint. The thought immediately obtrudes itself that a similar national sentiment, which in common fairness must be allowed to the Slavs as well as to the Germans and Magyars, must have made the defeat of the Central Powers seem as desirable to them as the victory of the Central Powers seemed to the Germans. The Germans thus added to the number of their enemies by the hostility of the majority of the population of Austria-Hungary and by their policy did sorry service to the German cause. For they influenced the political distribution of power in the War so unfavourably that it was bound to end with the collapse of Central Europe. The Pan-Germans, and with them the German Supreme Command, as well as our military



authorities, relied on the power of the Military Laws and the support of the capitalists, who had a predominant interest in the War, to force the Slavs to fight for the German cause and to prevent treachery. If they had been able to do this, and if success had been on their side, their attitude might have been regarded as intelligent. But our military authorities, although they used their power freely to persecute everyone who appeared even suspicious in their eyes, were as little able to prevent the desertion of Czech regiments as they were able to prevent military and political treason. And worst of all, their conduct provided rich material for the propaganda against the Monarchy which was started abroad, and the disintegrating effect of which both on the fighting and the home fronts brought about the ruin of the Central Powers.

## VI

Of the innumerable political and military persecutions directed against the Slavs, which in their totality had the most disastrous political effects and provided the foreigner so abundantly with facts enabling him to trumpet forth to all the world the brutal treatment of the Slav races and the hopeless state of our internal conditions, I will select only one, as particularly typical, the Kramář case. I shall not go into the question whether Dr. Kramář was actually guilty of treason against the Monarchy or not; the only important thing in judging this case is whether the verdict was given on duly proved evidence of guilt or whether it was a political verdict, that is, a dictatorial one.

In November, 1915, at the time the case was being tried, Count Adalbert Sternberg, a man whose accurate and courageous judgment in political matters I have always sincerely admired, wrote a memorandum in which he first broke a lance for the summoning of Parliament, and then went on to discuss the Kramář case.<sup>1</sup> I will quote certain passages of it which

<sup>1</sup> This memorandum, of which he sent copies to the head of the Military Chancery, Freiherr von Marterer and myself in April, 1917, made a very strong impression on me, and confirmed the view I had already formed of the case.

may be of interest in forming a judgment of this case. "In order to understand the Kramář case, one must be thoroughly acquainted with Bohemian conditions. I was in Court yesterday as a witness. I went there rejoicing in the thought that Dr. Kramář had actually been guilty of high treason, and that he would be morally crushed in Court. All the rumours that had reached me went to show that high treason could be regarded as actually existing. To my amazement, I am now obliged to see that the indictment of Dr. Kramář was not an indictment for high treason, but a controversy about political views. In particular, the indictment is so voluminous that it took eight hours to read aloud, and the number of points in it is so large that this by itself proves that no tangible facts are available. Further, the contents of the indictment show such an ignorance of the subject, that if it is published later all politicians will hold up their hands in amazement that such a document should ever have been compiled. . . . It is a remarkable fact that in the Court room, in which journalists belonging to German papers, German deputies and industrialists were present, everybody without exception expressed the view that this was not an indictment for high treason, but a tendencious political case. . . . I am not a professional magistrate, and can only judge in the light of my common-sense and political tact. My verdict on the indictment is thus not authoritative. But it would be very simple to procure an authoritative judgment in a case of this kind by laying the charge before four first-class Vienna jurists not of Czech nationality, who are thus prejudiced beforehand against Dr. Kramář. If any one of the four approves of it I will lay down my arms. I consider this to be impossible, but I have been visited by a doubt whether this whole method of judicial procedure, which is bound to become a permanent tool in the hands of the coming opposition and revolution, will not serve to some extent these ends. As a mortal enemy of Dr. Kramář I must give urgent warning about this case, conducted in this manner and introduced by such a bill of indictment, and all those who were present at the case share my views. It is very sad that a part of the audience should consider a case tendencious; it is much sadder when they all take this view, and when these ~~consist~~ consist not of the friends but of the enemies of Dr. Kramář."

Now, very soon after the sentence on Dr. Kramář, I had an opportunity to hear the verdict on the case of a judge, a German judge, it is true, but one no less distinguished than Dr. von Grabmayr.<sup>1</sup> I had followed the case with close attention, and I was interested to have the judgment I had formed of it tested by the views of one of our highest judges, a man of indisputably German speech and German sentiment, and moreover a political opponent of Dr. Kramář's. Dr. von Grabmayr visited me in my office at the House of Lords, and the conversation happened to touch on the Kramář case. I expressed grave doubts about the judicial defensibility of the verdict. Grabmayr was sitting in an armchair near my desk. Hardly had I uttered these words than he rose and held out his hand to me, saying: "You are the first person from whom I have heard a correct view of the case. I followed it with the closest attention, and could not find a single proven fact to justify a sentence for high treason. Anyone who studies the case must come to this conclusion, but no one dares to give voice to it."

The commutation of Dr. Kramář's sentence to one of imprisonment prevented political murder. I shall give a more detailed account of the circumstances which led up to the amnesty in a later part of my book.

<sup>1</sup> The then President of the Supreme Court.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE CHANGE OF MONARCHS

#### I

IN the autumn of 1916 an unlucky star shone down on Austria. She lost by death two of the most distinguished of her statesmen, Count Karl Stürgkh and Prince Franz Thun. They were soon followed on the road to eternal peace by the aged Emperor Franz Joseph.

On the 22nd October, 1916, the hand of an infamous assassin struck down the Prime Minister, Count Karl Stürgkh, as he was lunching in company with a few gentlemen at the Hotel Meissl & Schadn in Vienna. A strange man walked up to the table. Count Stürgkh unsuspectingly turned to him in his friendly way to ask what he wanted. Then the bullet of the murderer struck him. The political associates of the assassin tried to make the atrocious crime out to be a desperate deed committed on behalf of the distressed populace; but in reality this ostensibly political murder was an expression of the criminal temper of an unrestrained terrorist. Stürgkh's successor in office was Dr. von Koerber, certainly one of the most competent men of the old Austria. The semi-official Press announced with no little emphasis all the measures by which the new Government would have to make up for the deficiencies of the old one in the matter of feeding the population, an indirect indictment of the dead Prime Minister. This caused great remark, and was criticized in a manner not exactly flattering to Dr. von Koerber. But in spite of all these frantic efforts the situation did not greatly improve. Koerber and his successors were no more successful than Stürgkh had been in breaking down Tisza's opposition to furnishing Austria with an adequate supply of grain from Hungary's surplus. It was even said that the Emperor Franz Joseph had expressed himself disparagingly about the alleged slackness of the Stürgkh Government. But this belongs to the realm

of legends and fables, as does the frequently alleged hostility of the Archduke Karl to Count Stürgkh. I once asked the Emperor Karl when he happened to be speaking of Stürgkh how the Emperor Franz Joseph had been affected by the news of Stürgkh's murder. "His late Majesty," was the reply, "valued Count Stürgkh very highly, and never changed his good opinion of him. There was a great deal of intriguing against him, especially from the military side. Conrad von Hötzendorf and all his following were always finding fault with him, but His Majesty stuck to him. When he was murdered, the Emperor said to Count Paar: 'This is far, far worse than the loss of a battle.' There is not a word of truth in the stories that His Majesty spoke unfavourably of him after his murder." In June, 1917, when Parliament was working without leadership or direction, the Emperor Karl said to me that the conduct of the Reichsrat was a remarkable justification of the view of the murdered Prime Minister. The Emperor Karl was opposed to him in principle on the question of summoning the Reichsrat, but this did not affect the high opinion he held of him. He said to me again and again that Count Stürgkh was one of the most distinguished and able politicians that Austria had possessed. And how often, when he was reviewing the possible candidates for Government office, he thought regretfully of the premature and tragic end of this distinguished and eminent statesman; how often he declared that his murder had been an irretrievable loss to Austria!

I visited Stürgkh a few days before his murder. We discussed the question how soon the evacuation of the military hospital which had been established in the Houses of Parliament could be carried out. On my remarking that this could be done in a very short time, in a month if necessary, whenever the resumption of Parliamentary life proved necessary, Stürgkh replied: "There can be no thought of that for the moment. We must first have some guarantee for a more or less smooth functioning of Parliament. We cannot afford other countries the spectacle of a Parliament unable to conduct its business. We should merely reveal all the weaknesses of Austria. It would be a presage of imminent collapse." I urged that the Government was assuming an enormous ~~re-~~

sponsibility under this absolutist regime, and that we should be entirely dependent on Hungary, which had a platform in Parliament from which it could address the outside world. "That is true, of course," replied Stürgkh, "but, believe me, to summon Parliament at the present moment would be far the greater evil of the two. We should provide the enemy propaganda against Austria with material, and lose the War at home." This was Stürgkh's unshakable belief, and there was a great deal to be said for it. It turned out to be right, but only because, when Parliament was summoned, no clear outline of a Government programme was submitted to it. The Emperor Karl could not find Ministers able to make the decision to carry out, or even to announce, the great ideas of constitutional reform he held to be indispensable.

Soon after the murder of Count Stürgkh, Prince Franz Thun died on his estate at Tetschen. He ended his momentous political career after a wearisome illness on 1st November, 1916, without seeing the work to which he had devoted all his energy, the National Compromise in Bohemia, crowned with success. No other had such a grasp of this difficult question as Thun. And yet even he did not succeed in accomplishing the task. For it was not a problem of Bohemia alone, but of the Empire, a problem which was insoluble so long as the dualistic form of Government was maintained.

Up to February, 1915, Prince Franz Thun was Governor of Bohemia. But immediately after the outbreak of War, a hue and cry was started against him. All the acts of treachery committed, true and even untrue, were laid at Thun's door. He had not yet permitted himself to be completely convinced that it was at the moment a case of a "fight of the Germans against the Slavs." As early as November, 1914, the High Command at Teschen had, in a report addressed to the Emperor, demanded emergency powers for Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia, as well as the institution of field courts. Only a general, the report explained, could maintain order in Bohemia. In Teschen people were unaware of the causes of the disease from which Bohemia—and the whole of Austria—was suffering. A complete lack of understanding of the Bohemian question prevailed in Teschen. People still believed that the Provost-Marshal was the only proper in-

structor in patriotism, and that political problems could best be solved by sabre and chain rattling. Also it was the heyday of militarism. Thus ambitious generals from the interior stepped forward as candidates. But the Emperor Franz Joseph had the right judgment and the right experience. He refused to agree to the proposal of a military dictatorship in Bohemia. He nominated Count Max Coudenhove Governor of Bohemia in place of Prince Thun.

## II

At the beginning of November, 1916, the Emperor Franz Joseph fell ill, at first only of a trifling cold. On the 8th a slight sensation of pain occurred in the region of the right pleura, which soon spread. Up to the middle of the month his state of health varied, but did not give rise to anxiety; the cough, however, refused to disappear. The Emperor's physician-in-ordinary, General Staff Doctor Ritter von Kerzl, and Hofrat Professor Dr. Ortner, who had been called in in consultation, were unable so far to discover any inflammatory process in the breathing organs. On the 15th the illness took a serious turn, which began with fever and loss of appetite. After a slight temporary improvement, the fever and weakness increased steadily. But there was no change in the Emperor's mode of life. He rose, every day, as he had always done, at 3.30, sat working at his desk from early morning to evening, received the reports of the Court officials and Ministers, and gave audiences. On the 13th of the month he received the brother of the King of Rumania, Prince Wilhelm von Hohenzollern, who was staying in Vienna at the time, and who had announced a short time previously that he disapproved of his brother's policy, and was on the side of the Quadruple Alliance. That same day, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Freiherr von Burian, was also received in an audience that lasted for an hour and a quarter. Even after the illness had taken a serious turn for the worse on the 15th, the Emperor continued to give audiences in addition to his strenuous Government business. On the 16th, after the

usual reports, he saw his granddaughter, the Princess Elisabeth Windischgraetz. That day he also received the Hungarian Minister for National Defence, Freiherr von Hazaj, and on the 17th the Chief of the General Staff, Freiherr Conrad von Hötzendorf, the latter remaining with him for an hour and a quarter.

On the 18th the condition of weakness markedly increased. After a slight meal, which he ate without appetite, the Emperor, however, smoked his usual cigar, which he could not do without. The 19th brought a slight improvement. The body temperature had fallen a little. Nevertheless, the bulletin issued by the doctors on 20th November left no hope. A patch of inflammation in the lung had revealed itself, the fever had not fallen below  $100.4^{\circ}$ , and the state of weakness had increased. On the 20th the sovereign received Field-Marshal the Archduke Friedrich, who was passing through Vienna, in an audience which lasted for three-quarters of an hour; he reported on the military situation in all the theatres of war. In the afternoon the Archduke Karl Franz Joseph and the Archduchess Zita, who had come from Reichenau by motor, were received. They remained with the Emperor for over an hour. Owing to the increase of weakness anxiety about the life of the Emperor grew greater every hour. The members of the inner circle of the Imperial family were informed. The Archduchess Marie Valerie had been near her father all the past few days. The chief pastor of the archiepiscopal see of Vienna, Cardinal Piffl, had ordered prayers for the health of the Emperor. Intercessory services were held in all the churches in Vienna.

On the 21st November, after an almost undisturbed night, the Emperor rose, as usual, at half-past three. At half-past four the aide-de-camp on duty, Colonel Spanyik, found His Majesty sitting working at his desk. Soon afterwards Hofrat Ortner and Dr. von Kerzl appeared. They found that the fever had not abated and that the exhaustion had increased. But, as the patch of inflammation had not spread, the doctors still felt a little hope. At eight o'clock the Chief Court Chamberlain came to report, and requested the Emperor to receive the Court Chaplain, Dr. Seydl, in order that he might give him the Pope's blessing, which had been brought by the



papal nuncio. Prince Montenuovo, who observed the Emperor's growing exhaustion with increasing anxiety, and saw the end approaching, had the happy thought of persuading the Emperor to take the Holy Sacrament before receiving the Pope's blessing. When Montenuovo remarked that he could not give His Majesty the Pope's blessing, as this could only be done by a priest, the Emperor replied: "Well, send for Dr. Seydl." After some further business discussion with Montenuovo, he received the Archduchess Marie Valerie and her daughter, the Countess Waldburg-Zeil, and after that the usual reports from the two Adjutant-Generals, Count Paar and Freiherr von Bolfras. Meanwhile, Prince Montenuovo had informed the Palace and Court Chaplain, Dr. Seydl, that His Majesty was awaiting him. He proceeded to the Imperial Apartments expecting to find the Emperor on his death-bed. He was profoundly shaken and amazed when the door of His Majesty's study opened and disclosed the Emperor standing in the middle of the room, as he always did when giving audience. His Majesty greeted the prelate in his inimitably courteous way and led him to the desk. Dr. Seydl recommended that he should take the Holy Communion as the most suitable preparation for receiving the Pope's blessing. The Emperor assented, made his confession and received the Sacrament and the Pope's blessing. He dismissed the Palace Chaplain with the remark that the kindness of the Holy Father had given him infinite pleasure.

About 11.30 the heir-apparent and his wife appeared. They told the aide-de-camp, Colonel Spanyik, that they would not go in unless His Majesty would remain sitting so as not to tire himself. Colonel Spanyik announced the visitors. The Emperor wanted to jump up and embrace them. When the aide-de-camp told him what the Archduke Karl had said, the Emperor declared that it was impossible to receive a lady without rising. The Colonel had great difficulty in inducing His Majesty to remain seated, but finally, after much thought, he gave in, saying: "Well, well, if there is no other way, it shall be so." The Archduke and his wife remained for only a short time. The Emperor complained of his health, but said he hoped he would soon be well again, as he had no time for being ill. He spoke of the good news of the success of the

troops against Rumania, and of the great pleasure that the sympathy of the Holy Father had given him.

About one o'clock there was a turn for the worse, and the Emperor was unable to work with his private secretary, Freiherr von Schiessl, who had been summoned for one-thirty. He spent an hour or two in the afternoon in an easy chair. At four o'clock he returned to work at his desk. Colonel Spanyol, who was watching him in a mirror in the next room, saw him rest now on his right arm, now on his left, as if worn out; finally he dropped the pen, laid his head on his hands and fell asleep. About five o'clock, on Dr. Kerzl's advice, an arm-chair was pushed up to the desk, and he worked a little longer; then he arranged his papers and locked the portfolio. A prie-dieu was brought to him, and he said his evening prayers sitting before it in an arm-chair. Then he was put to bed by Ketterl, his faithful valet. When the latter asked for further orders, the Emperor replied: "I have not finished my work, call me at half-past three as usual." He fell asleep, but very soon awoke again. He asked for something to drink. No one could hold the teacup properly. Finally Ketterl took it, raised the pillows and succeeded in pouring a few drops down the Emperor's throat, who said with a smile, in a low voice: "What's all this?" Soon after, his breathing became short and he began to lose consciousness. Professor Dr. Ortner gave an injection to stimulate the heart, which the Emperor did not notice. At half-past eight the Court Chaplain was sent for to administer extreme unction to the dying man. In addition to the doctors, there were present the heir-apparent and his wife, the Archduchesses Maria Josepha and Marie-Therese, the Archduke Franz Salvator, the Archduchess Marie Valerie, the Chief Court Chamberlain, Prince Montenuovo, Count Paar, the aides-de-camp, Colonel Spanyol and Count Hoyos, Hofrat Freiherr von Prileszky, and the valets, Eugen Ketterl and Friedrich Spannbauer. The Archduchess Marie Valerie knelt by her father's head. Dr. Ritter von Kerzl felt the pulse and noted the increasingly weaker respiration of the dying Emperor. Dr. Seydl administered supreme unction and gave him plenary remission *in articulo mortis*. When the Chaplain uttered the "Amen" after the prayers for the dying, a few seconds' pause ensued, then Dr.

Kerzl announced that His Majesty had breathed his last. It was five minutes past nine.

Thus, after a life entirely devoted to work and duty, the Emperor Franz Joseph, one of the most venerable and distinguished figures in history, the last representative of unapproachable sovereignty, was called to his fathers. Never had he abated a hair's breadth of his high dignity. Even when, during a life full of significant events and heavy blows of fate, he gave way to ordinary human feelings, he did it in such a way as to silence all criticism. His death was as his life had been. He preserved his distinguished and knightly bearing up to the last hours of his life. If it were not too banal for the tragic occasion, one might be tempted to apply the expression "according to programme" to the manner of his death. When the Palace Chaplain uttered the "Amen" after the prayer for the dead, the Emperor drew his last breath. He departed peacefully with no visible sign of struggle.

The accession of the new monarch happened automatically. The Emperor Karl received the condolences of the Imperial House. Then allegiance was paid to him as Emperor.

In the early morning of 22nd November the young Emperor and Empress prayed by the bier of their departed great uncle and received the Holy Sacrament. In a fateful hour, with profound seriousness and full consciousness of his almost superhuman sphere of duty, the Emperor Karl assumed the burden of Government.

That same morning there came to the Palace of Schönbrunn Frau Katharina Schratt, the woman who had brightened the last days of this sorely afflicted monarch with her kindness and her inexhaustible humour, and kept his friendship by tact and unselfishness. All the dignitaries of the Empire had paid her homage while her great protector was still alive. Now they tried to keep her from the bier of the dead Emperor. Heartbroken and bowed with grief, she was standing in the ante-room of the death-chamber, when the Emperor Karl saw her. He went straight up to her, offered her his arm, and led her up to the bier of her dead friend.

## III

"I will do all in my power to put an end to the horrors and sacrifices of the War at the earliest possible moment, and to restore the sadly-missed blessings of peace to my peoples." With these words, which had been inserted in the Accession Manifesto at the express command of the young Emperor, the Emperor Karl began his reign.

The Manifesto appeared on the evening of 22nd November, simultaneously with the news that the young Emperor had confirmed in office all the Austrian and also all the Hungarian Ministers. The draft of the proclamation was made by the Aulic Councillor of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Baron Matscheko, who had the reputation of an excellent stylist. The Prime Minister, Dr. von Koerber, interpolated a passage, and the Emperor Karl gave orders that the Manifesto must contain some expression of his intention of ending the War as soon as possible. Baron Matscheko had carried out his task brilliantly. The words in which the young Emperor addressed his people for the first time were dignified and perfectly suited to the occasion. But the Government had contributed nothing. The Manifesto was empty of all real content. It gave the painful impression of a piece of work barren of ideas, carried out confusedly and at the last moment. The leading statesmen had allowed the death of the eighty-year-old Emperor to take them by surprise. They had seemingly never thought of the fact that his reign by any human reckoning could not last much longer, and that provision should be made for the first measures of the new ruler. It had never occurred to them that these earliest steps would constitutionally be of far-reaching importance. A number of distinguished men had prepared an Accession Manifesto for the Archduke Franz Ferdinand. Every word had been scrupulously weighed and had been the object of exhaustive discussion. Among the statesmen and ministers who were called upon to initiate the new heir-apparent, the Archduke Karl, into the business of Government, not a single one called his attention to the urgent need for thinking out the first steps to be taken after his accession, which was bound to occur in the

more or less near future. The Archduke himself only reached Vienna from the Front three days before the Emperor's death. His war service kept him out of touch with the Government. And the Government had plainly lacked the intelligence to see that a new era had dawned with the World War, in which there was no more room for all the antiquated methods and petty arts of Government which are best described by Taaffe's expression, "muddling through" ("keeping on with the sausage-making").

The world was ripe for new ideas. In Austria, particularly, people were longing for the liberating activity of a young ruler. This should have found expression, even if only in a general form, in the very first Manifesto. But the last Cabinet of the Emperor Franz Joseph had taken none of the necessary steps. So it happened that even the paragraph<sup>1</sup> inserted hastily in the Manifesto by Dr. von Koerber, apart from the worn-out phrases in which it was couched, contained nothing but platitudes.

In the period immediately preceding the death of the Emperor Franz Joseph, I had no opportunity to talk to the Archduke Karl about the measures to be taken in anticipation of his accession, because his military duties, first as commander of a corps in the South Tyrol and then as Army Group Commander on the Eastern Front, kept him away from Vienna. At the last moment, however, I attempted to intervene, as I saw that the serious illness of the Emperor was bringing us close to a moment full of importance for the history of the Monarchy, the heir-apparent's first expression of his views on constitutional questions. The Hungarian coronation oath had to be recognized as one of the chief obstacles in the way of the Crown in the matter of adjusting the nationality problem, and, more particularly, of solving the Yugoslav question.<sup>2</sup> The postponement of the taking of the coronation oath

<sup>1</sup> The passage in question read as follows: "I will be a just and kindly prince to my peoples. I will maintain their constitutional liberties and other privileges and be solicitous to preserve equality of rights for all. It will be my ceaseless endeavour to advance the moral and spiritual welfare of my peoples, to defend freedom and order in my states, and to ensure to all the working members of society the fruits of honourable toil."

<sup>2</sup> The Hungarian coronation oath bound the King to maintain the constitution, and this made him dependent on the majority in the Hungarian

by the new Emperor was thus a political point of paramount importance. I knew that Count Tisza would exploit the inexperience of the new ruler, and would do everything to force him into the straight path of a narrowly Magyar policy at the earliest possible moment. By the coronation oath the power of the Emperor Karl would be restricted to the utmost extent, and he would be deprived of the possibility of ever doing anything to break the power of the leading Magyar politicians and their hangers-on. I placed very little hope in the judgment of the Austrian statesmen. Would they let the opportunity slip past of freeing themselves from their dependence on the leading politicians of Hungary, of which they were always complaining? Would they recognize the connection between the obstacles to the Crown caused by the Hungarian coronation oath and the most vital questions of the Dual Monarchy, especially the connection with the Jugoslav question, and warn the Monarch against a hasty coronation? That was the first question I put to myself. But in Austria energies were exhausted by the despatch of everyday business.

The day after the death of the Emperor Franz Joseph I handed to Count Wallis a *promemoria*, which I had composed in conjunction with a certain person who was familiar with the intentions of the murdered heir to the Throne, the Archduke Franz Ferdinand. I asked Count Wallis to submit the *promemoria* to the Emperor Karl. Although I did not expect any great result from it, I nevertheless did not wish, at this important moment of the change of Emperors, to neglect the duty of drawing early and urgent attention to the unique opportunity which the Crown, while still free from all hindrances, before the taking of the coronation oath, had for solving the great problems. I also wished to show the way in which the fettering of the Crown might be checked. The memorandum read as follows:

“ In accordance with Article 8 of the Fundamental Law of the State of 21st December, 1867, No. 144 of the Parliament, that is, on the will of Count Tisza, who commanded this majority. The coronation oath also bound the King to maintain the integrity of the lands of the Hungarian Crown, to which large Jugoslav districts belonged.

Imperial Statute Book, the Emperor on accession to the Throne takes the solemn oath in the presence of both Houses of the Reichsrat:

‘to maintain the fundamental laws of the kingdoms and lands represented in the Reichsrat inviolable, and to rule in harmony with them and the general laws.’

“In accordance with the Hungarian Law III of 1790-91, the King of Hungary must permit himself to be crowned within six months of the day of the death of the late Emperor, which is conditional upon his previously having taken the coronation oath to the Hungarian constitution and Hungarian laws. Previous to that date the King may not sanction Hungarian laws, because, in accordance with the legal provision cited above, the ‘granting of privileges shall be exercised only by the Majesty of the duly-crowned King.’

“These legal provisions under present conditions force His Majesty into an impossible position, as the Austrian and Hungarian Constitutional laws differ from and are even in conflict with each other in many points, some of them of the highest importance (for example the position of Dalmatia, the legislative rights of the Delegations, and the constitutional position of the Army).

“This difficulty did not arise for the late Emperor Franz Joseph, because he did not take the Hungarian coronation oath until the year 1867, that is, nineteen years after he came to the Throne, and never made the solemn oath in Austria at all.

“Since it must be regarded as out of the question for a ruler on his accession to undertake duties which are self-contradictory, and which must bring him into conflict with his conscience and his duties as a Monarch, there remains nothing but to postpone the taking of these solemn oaths, until the legal contradictions have been removed.

“In order to prepare the way for their removal, it would be possible for an Imperial autograph letter to be issued both in Austria and Hungary, in which the Austrian and the Hungarian Ministries respectively would be instructed to take the necessary steps as soon as possible for

sending an Austrian and Hungarian deputation, which would jointly work out proposals to be introduced in the Austrian and Hungarian Parliaments, for the purpose of coming to a decision on the question of the clauses that require amendment.

"Both autograph letters might state that His Majesty, in view of the contradictions in the constitutional laws of the two countries, cannot before God, his conscience and his peoples, take the responsibility of solemnly binding himself to maintain these conflicting laws.

"Not until the deputations and the two Parliaments have abolished these contradictions, will the difficulties be removed and His Majesty be in a position to comply with the legal provisions referred to."

But things moved more quickly than I expected. By the time Count Wallis had laid my *promemoria* before His Majesty, Count Tisza had already been received in audience.<sup>1</sup>

It was only a few hours since the Emperor Franz Joseph had drawn his last breath; the Emperor Karl was still standing bowed with grief by the death-bed of his great-uncle. He had hardly had time to collect his thoughts before Count Tisza appeared, to request a binding declaration in a matter which politically seemed purely advantageous, but which in its wider bearings was of great and even decisive importance for the reign of the young Emperor. Count Tisza was aware of what he was about. The Emperor Karl had expressed his intention of bringing the War to an end as soon as possible, and of neglecting no step which would enable him to attain this object at the earliest possible moment. Count Tisza fastened on to this. He explained that economic agreement with Germany was the indispensable preliminary condition for peace negotiations, but that the basis for such an agreement must be created by means of the Compromise with

<sup>1</sup> Count Tisza, after previous discussion with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, appeared at Schönbrunn at 11 a.m. on 22nd November, and was received in audience by the Emperor Karl. After the audience, Tisza announced to Baron Burian that His Majesty had agreed to an immediate coronation, and proceeded at once to the Private Office to prepare the autograph letter on the subject with the aid of Daruvúry, a chief of section in the Office. The iron must be struck while it was still hot.



Hungary. The King of Hungary must, accordingly, by an immediate coronation, be placed in a position enabling him to sanction Hungarian laws. The coronation was thus the first step towards peace. In this way Count Tisza trapped the King. At the same time, in order to draw the bars tighter, two prominent representatives of public opinion in Hungary were interviewed, and expressed their belief that an immediate coronation was highly desirable. Thus at the very beginning of his reign, the Emperor Karl's love of peace and the first expression of his intention to "end this bloodshed" was exploited by Tisza, in order to rob the Monarch of the power with which alone he might have been free to solve the problems of the Dual Monarchy to the advantage of all his peoples. An immediate coronation was solely to the interest of the leading Hungarian politicians, both the Party of '67 and the Party of '48, who were alarmed for their powers and privileges. The people would not have been disturbed by postponement. Certain objections would have been silenced immediately, if the King had declared that, in accordance with Hungarian law, he must before his coronation come to an understanding with the whole Hungarian nation, but that he could not regard the Hungarian Parliament as representative of the whole Hungarian nation, as the existing electoral laws, contrary to those of all other European countries, allowed only an infinitesimally small fraction of the population the right to share in political life. Moreover, even Hungarian law itself provided for an interval of six months before the coronation. To pledge the King on the very first day of his reign was, therefore, neither constitutional nor necessary on account of the political atmosphere in Hungary. It was merely extremely suspicious.

The reason for the haste with which Tisza attacked the coronation question was quite plain to me. He was not sure whether the Emperor Karl had been familiar with the plans of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, nor how far he intended to guide himself by them. Moreover, the possibility of the Emperor's being influenced by persons who had belonged to the circle of Franz Ferdinand, his bitterest enemy, seemed a threatening prospect. But most of all Tisza feared the influence of Prince Konrad Hohenlohe, which would disturb

his own plans, as he knew that the Prince, when Governor of Trieste, had been a frequent and welcome guest at Miramar, and that he was one of the few people who had been intimate with the Emperor from his early days. And Hohenlohe had the reputation of being a very enlightened politician. In the year 1906, during his period as Prime Minister, which lasted only a few days, he had shown himself strongly opposed to Hungarian claims. When he was *Bezirkshauptmann* at Teplitz, he permitted the performance of Hauptmann's play, *Die Weber*, which had been prohibited in Austria on account of its socialistic tendencies. From that time onwards he was known as the "Red Prince." Hohenlohe had also been on the Archduke Franz Ferdinand's list of candidates for the post of Chief Court Chamberlain, and was also designed for that of Prime Minister. He was not in high favour with the Emperor Franz Joseph. These were threatening symptoms.

Tisza regarded it as his duty as a Hungarian patriot to take timely measures in advance to render innocuous threatening influences which in his opinion might be harmful to Hungary. He had, as always—he was a man of will and action—done his work well. By the 23rd November the Emperor Karl had signed an autograph letter addressed to Count Tisza, in which he announced his intention of "being crowned as soon as possible King of Hungary, Croatia-Slavonia and Dalmatia." Then followed the amazing event that on the same day the Austrian Prime Minister, Dr. von Koerber, countersigned an Imperial autograph letter directed to him, in which he was instructed to take the necessary steps in preparation for the Imperial solemn oath to uphold the Austrian Constitution. How could the two Prime Ministers advise their young master to take the oath to uphold two Constitutions which were contradictory in important points? That would have been the moment for Dr. von Koerber to win a deserved reputation as a far-seeing statesman, by revealing the impossible position into which the Emperor would be betrayed by the legal obligations devolving on him on the Hungarian and Austrian sides, if he took the oath to uphold two conflicting Constitutions. He would in this way have demonstrated that he saw through the purely selfish

Magyar policy of Count Tisza, which was not adapted to the interests of the Monarchy as a whole, and that he was not prepared to miss the opportunity of preventing the Emperor's hands from being tied prematurely in a matter of such grave importance. But Dr. von Koerber acquiesced, and endorsed the Imperial autograph letter, although he must have known that the instructions it contained could not be carried out. In actual fact the Emperor Karl never took the solemn oath to uphold the Austrian Constitution. He simply could not.

On the evening of the 25th November Count Wallis told me that he had communicated the contents of my memorandum to the Emperor. The Emperor had replied that he was well aware of the contradictions in the Constitutions, and that it would be the business of the Ministers to find a way out. For the rest, it was his intention to be crowned not only in Hungary, but also in Austria and in Bohemia. Bohemia must be granted a Ministry of its own. I expressed my doubts. His Majesty would very soon learn that behind the coronation questions lurked great and difficult political problems for the solution of which he would require the advice of active, experienced, and unbiased statesmen. Ministers who advised or permitted an immediate, unconditional coronation as King of Hungary would never be able to solve these difficult questions. In my eyes they had already given sufficient proof of their incapacity to see the political situation in the proper perspective.

#### IV

Now began the preparations for the Emperor's coronation as King of Hungary. A struggle between the parties in the Hungarian Parliament on the question who should be commissioned to represent the Palatine ended in favour of Count Tisza, although the Emperor Karl would have preferred another choice. Nevertheless, he held the question to be of too little significance to go beyond an expression of his wish. It was necessary to have someone to represent the Palatine, because he possessed certain symbolic functions in the coronation ceremonial.

On the 27th December, 1916, the Emperor and Empress made their entry into the Royal Castle of Buda. The streets of the Hungarian capital were not merely adorned with festive decorations; there were embodied triumph and jubilation in the dazzling splendour of colour in the streets with their triumphal arches, streamers and flags, inscriptions, carpets, and flowers. A bright flame of enthusiasm glowed in all Hungarian hearts on these coronation days. The magnificence of the almost mystical, age-old traditional ceremonies, the genuine patriotism of the warm-hearted enthusiastic Magyars, the cries of "eljen" which greeted the Imperial couple from tens of thousands of throats, could not but bind for ever to the Hungarians the heart of the young King, so susceptible to warmly expressed feelings of enthusiasm. On 28th December the Emperor Karl, as King of Hungary, signed the inaugural coronation diploma. The coronation proper took place on the 30th, in the Coronation Church at Buda, called after Mathias Corvinus. The Prince Primate, Dr. Czernoch, with the assistance of Count Tisza, placed on the head of the King, who wore the cloak of St. Stephen<sup>1</sup> about his shoulders, the venerable old crown of St. Stephen,<sup>2</sup> consecrated to the Virgin Mary, and laid the sceptre and Imperial orb<sup>3</sup> in his hand. Under the open sky, with the sacred crown on his head, the cross<sup>4</sup> in his left hand, and three fingers of his right hand raised, the King then took the oath to the Constitution. Then he rode up the Coronation

<sup>1</sup> The old coronation cloak of St. Stephen was already lost by the time of the coronation of Maria Theresa. Its place was taken by a mantle, artistically embroidered by Queen Gisela, Stephen's consort, which bore the name "the cloak of St. Stephen," although Stephen had never worn it. According to an inscription, it dates from the year 1031.

<sup>2</sup> The crown was sent to St. Stephen by Pope Sylvester in the year 1000. The head band which was placed round the crown proper and which was adorned with sapphires and pictures of the saints in enamel was supposed to be a gift from the Byzantine Emperor Michael Dukas (1001-1078) to King Geza I.

<sup>3</sup> The orb does not date from the time of St. Stephen, but probably from the first half of the 14th century. It is gilt, with a coat of arms in enamel and a gold patriarchal cross.

<sup>4</sup> The so-called altar cross is an old Latin cross in gold filigree dating from the 12th century, richly adorned with pearls and precious stones.

Hill, and waved the Imperial sword<sup>1</sup> to the four points of the compass, as a sign that he would guard and protect the land against all foes.

With his coronation as King of Hungary, the Emperor Karl assumed the full sovereign power over Hungary symbolized by the sacred crown. In reality, however, henceforth not his will, but that of Tisza, was the authority. Tisza remained the leader of the majority even after his resignation of the premiership, and with its aid settled all questions of Government. The final event showed where his obdurate will led to. It was proved that it was not the Magyar national State idea, but simply and solely the dynasty that had kept the nationalities united with Hungary. When the royal sceptre was deprived of its power to solve the nationality problem, when Hungary became independent and the Hapsburg dynasty had gone, when the mystery of the sacred crown was no longer held in regard, the Hungarian "national State," which was nothing but a fiction, fell apart into its real national component parts. The Magyar leaders, by their disregard of St. Stephen's fundamental principle, *Unius gentis uniusque linguae regnum imbecile et fragile est*, had brought the thousand-year old Empire to ruin.

With the coronation of the Emperor Karl as King of Hungary, the change of Emperors was fully accomplished.

<sup>1</sup> The sword is looked upon as a relic of Attila, King of the Huns. St. Stephen is supposed to have worn it. But it is believed to be a late Gothic piece of work, dating from about the 15th century.

## CHAPTER V

THE EMPEROR'S NEW MINISTERS, PRINCE HOHENLOHE,  
COUNT CLAM, COUNT CZERNIN.

### I

WHEN the Emperor Karl ascended the Throne, he took over the government of an Empire which inside its still glittering outer shell was rotten and corrupt. The Military Laws were the last clamps which held the cracked edifice of Empire together. This was visible to all the world, and to the Emperor Karl as well. He had seen it when he was still Archduke. Public opinion laid all the blame for the barren state of politics, not on the great age of the Emperor Franz Joseph, who retained his judgment to the last, but on the assumption of power by many advisers, statesmen, and Court dignitaries, who kept the sovereign isolated from the outer world. The young Emperor was expected to effect a change. The Emperor Karl very soon realized that the old counsellors of his great uncle were wedded to the methods of government with which they had ruled the Monarchy to death in the past twenty years, and that they would try to tie him to these same methods. At first he confirmed the former Court dignitaries and ministers in their posts, but he soon surrounded himself with men of his own choice. Unfortunately, his choice proved not to be a happy one.

On 19th December, 1916, that is, a few days after the Emperor Karl's accession, I called on Prince Konrad Hohenlohe, who had just been appointed common Minister of Finance. I had known Hohenlohe for many years. I served under him in the Ministry of the Interior, when he was at the head of the Department of the Alpine Lands, which I took over myself later and carried on for several years. It was a pleasure to work under him; he was the very reverse of a bureaucrat. He was not overburdened with legal knowledge, but he had what is infinitely more valuable to political officials, but is very seldom met with, sympathy for and under-

standing of men, for the hidden life pulsing behind documents. He was always more interested in the case at issue than in legal points. In his department there were no arrears of work, "for," as he used to say, "people are waiting for the settlement of their business and they have no legal remedy against official delay." Later, when Hohenlohe was Governor of Trieste, I often saw him at Miramar. He was always the same, genial, gay, full of spirit and wit. It was impossible to be bored in his company or to resist his charm. His life was cut short by heart disease soon after the Revolution. He died suddenly, on a shooting expedition in the Alps, in the open air, in the midst of the nature he loved best of all.

When I visited him in his office on 9th December, 1916, he told me that, when the Emperor Franz Joseph was dying, no one had troubled about the question what was to be proposed to the young Emperor as his first Government measures. Events had been allowed to take their course without anyone's inconveniencing himself in the slightest. He had taken on himself to discuss the matter with a few gentlemen. They had agreed to begin by advising the young Emperor to confirm the former ministers and Court dignitaries in their posts. This had been done, but matters could not remain in that state, and important changes were imminent. The Austrian Prime Minister, Dr. von Koerber, in particular, had entirely lost the Emperor's confidence at his very first audience. "Do you know," were Hohenlohe's words, "what programme Koerber unrolled to his young master? He advised him to keep strictly on constitutional ground and not to undertake anything directed against the Constitution, that is to say, no legislation by Imperial Proclamation (*Okrois*), not even in the matter of standing orders, but to take the oath to the Constitution and summon the Reichsrat. It would, however, prove impossible to govern through the Reichsrat, and the Emperor could then do all that is necessary by means of Article 14.<sup>1</sup> Such is the ultimate

<sup>1</sup> According to § 14 of the Law of 21st December, 1867, on the representation of the Empire, if ordinances for which constitutionally the assent of the Reichsrat is required become urgently necessary at a time when it is not assembled, they may be enacted by means of imperial proclamations. It had become the custom for Governments, if they were afraid

wisdom of the man who passes in the German Empire for Austria's greatest statesman."

To my question what had the Emperor said to his programme and what line he was going to take, Hohenlohe replied: "You know the Emperor. He is just to everybody, and so he defended Koerber to me, though only up to a point. He said that Koerber might possibly be right. Perhaps such palliative methods were really all that could now be applied, but that, as an Emperor who had just assumed the reins of government, he could not possibly take up this standpoint." I observed that it would imply a total disregard of the expectant mood of the people. "But what is going to happen?" I asked. "I might as well ask you that," answered Hohenlohe. "I am not a prophet, but as the Emperor told me that Tisza demanded a twenty-year Compromise, I bet you a thousand to one that there will very soon be a collision; Tisza, as usual, will make large demands, and Koerber will not give way. Koerber, so the Emperor told me, is not in agreement with the Stürgkh Compromise arrangements."

Hohenlohe went on to tell me that the Emperor had spoken of me at his very first audience, saying that he was relying greatly on my services, and had me in mind for the post of his private secretary. "It is improbable," added Hohenlohe, "that I will remain long in this post. You know, I have always been a rover, and I think we shall soon be in closer touch." A few days after this conversation, a government crisis occurred with apparent suddenness. Dr. von Koerber handed in his resignation on 13th December, 1916. The Emperor accepted it, and invited Freiherr von Spitzmüller, who had been Minister for Commerce in the Stürgkh Cabinet, to form a government.

The political influence of Count Czernin had begun to make itself felt even before this. Prince Hohenlohe had recommended him to the young Monarch as one of the few men who were equal to the situation, and with whom reason—that they would not obtain the consent of the Reichsrat to certain measures, to prorogue or dissolve it, in order to be able to promulgate them under § 14. Such ordinances had, it is true, only provisionally the force of law, that is to say, they had to be submitted for approval to the next Reichstag meeting after their promulgation. Moreover, they were not applicable to certain things.



able discussion was possible. Hohenlohe was confounding critical ability with statecraft. In the first of these Czernin was undoubtedly a master, but Hohenlohe forgot that there is a gulf between the two capacities which can be bridged only by positive knowledge, experience, and the talent of a statesman, not merely a politician. The Emperor Karl knew that Czernin had been one of the most intimate members of the political circle of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, and thought this meant that he was familiar with conditions in the Monarchy, and would have practical ideas for the cure of abuses. He heard on all hands praise of Czernin's diplomatic activities in Bucharest, and, moreover, Czernin was the only man to voice the view that it was absolutely necessary to work for immediate peace. At the outset Czernin appeared on the scene with a programme of domestic policy. An amendment of the constitution was imperative, and could only be made by means of an *Oktroi*. There was certainly much to be said for this idea, which was strongly advocated in political circles at that time. I myself was for long convinced that the necessary reform of the constitution could only be carried out by means of an *Oktroi*. Nevertheless, even if such a reform had been decided on, the whole of the constitution and administration would have had to be put on new and sound foundations. But an *Oktroi* confined to the amendment of parliamentary standing orders, the introduction of German as the language of the State, and the division of Bohemia into regional governments, as had been thought of from the very outset, would have been sheer madness. For the German alliance was constitutionally tenable only if the non-German population were made to realize that the alliance did not exercise and would not exercise any influence to their detriment on the internal structure and arrangement of the national domestic affairs of the Monarchy.<sup>1</sup> The Emperor

<sup>1</sup> Count Czernin's statement in the Upper House on 18th July, 1918, was the exact opposite of the truth. He said that we, because "thank Heaven, we are steering the German course in our foreign policy," must follow the same course in our internal policy also. That was a blow in the face for the majority of the population, and a stroke of the axe at the root of the Monarchy. Did it not justify Slav treachery? Or did Count Czernin believe that the Slav camp was occupied by idiots who did not realize that the "German course" would mean nothing else than oppression of themselves!

was considering Count Czernin for the post of Foreign Minister. Things were not, however, sufficiently straightened out for the Emperor to decide on immediate and definitive appointments to the most influential departments. Count Czernin himself appears to have been undecided whether to accept the Foreign Office or the post of Austrian Prime Minister. Count Tisza's insistence, in view of the fact that the year 1916 was drawing to a close, on the necessity of concluding a twenty-year Compromise with Hungary set the ball rolling. The authorities looked round for a man who would be equal to this task. It was natural that the choice should fall on the experienced Minister, Freiherr von Spitzmüller, then on the retired list, who was familiar with all the details of the difficult subject of the Compromise. Count Tisza, too, had drawn the Emperor's attention to him. Accordingly, after the resignation of Dr. von Koerber, who had expressed his opposition to the Imperial Proclamation on the Constitution, and also to certain points in the Compromise, the Emperor entrusted Spitzmüller with the task of forming a government. Czernin, however, proposed that Spitzmüller should carry through the Compromise by means of Article 14, in order to clear the way for the Imperial Constitutional Proclamation. I shall not give my own views on this more than peculiar proposal of Czernin's, but shall let the Crown witness, Freiherr von Spitzmüller, speak. In a lecture which he gave to the Political Association in Vienna on 18th January, 1919, Spitzmüller said:

"Count Czernin considered it necessary that the Compromise should first be settled by means of § 14, in order to prepare the way for the Imperial Constitutional Proclamation. I succeeded in convincing the Emperor in an oral report—I am at last at liberty to tell the truth about this matter—that this plan was absolutely impracticable. First and most important of all, the Compromise was not ready; further, there was not the slightest necessity for the application of § 14. It was sufficient that the Compromise should be concluded between the Governments and be made the basis of negotiations with other States. Finally, I said that I considered that § 14, whatever one's opinion on it, was not legally applicable to the Compromise, because, since

the Compromise is a contractual instrument, it creates an unalterable fact, by means of which Parliament would be paralyzed in one of its most important functions. Its effect, therefore, in the matter of the Compromise is worse than a Constitutional *Okroi*. My point of view on the Compromise question and the serious objections I held to the *Okroi* plans decided Count Czernin to oppose my forming a government, and I begged the Emperor's permission to decline the task."<sup>1</sup>

Count Czernin, after considering for a moment becoming Austrian Prime Minister himself, then proposed his friend, Count Clam-Martinitz, who declared his readiness to burden his governmental programme with the plan of a Constitutional *Okroi*, and undertook the formation of a Cabinet. On 20th December, 1916, he was appointed Prime Minister of Austria. Count Clam, like Czernin, had belonged to the intimate Belvedere circle. He had accompanied the Archduke Franz Ferdinand on his world tour (1892-1893). At the age of thirty he had been sent as their deputy to the Bohemian Diet by the large landowners who held their estates on fideicommissum, his first entry into political life. As the successor of Prince Thun as chairman of the Right in the Upper House, he won increased political influence. He had been an unwavering support to Prince Alfred Windischgrätz, the president of this body, in political situations that were often difficult. His distinguished air, which had real distinction behind it, and his conciliatory character, had made him extraordinarily successful in conducting negotiations and bringing them to the desired conclusion, in which his gift of easy and fluent speech was also of great assistance. When the War broke out, he was one of the first of those who enlisted for war service in spite of their high position. As a captain he took part in the heavy fighting against Serbia and several times won military distinction. This active service was not

<sup>1</sup> The negotiations in question took place on 18th and 19th December, 1916. On the 18th Count Czernin was received in audience alone from 9.15 to 10 o'clock, and, with Spitzmüller, from 10.30 to 11.50. On the 19th Count Czernin was received alone from 9.25 to 9.45 and from 9.45 to 10 along with Spitzmüller. Immediately after that Count Clam had an audience, which lasted nearly an hour.

without effect on Count Clam's political views. He had always had the reputation of being a Bohemian feudal lord of the purest water. It therefore caused great surprise when he, as Austrian Prime Minister, allowed his programme to be saddled with a Constitutional Proclamation, which apparently was exclusively to the advantage of the Germans. His experiences in the field in contact with the military authorities, the untrustworthiness of many Czech troops, the 28th Prague Infantry Regiment, for example, which deserted almost to a man to the Russians in the fighting in the Carpathians, must have moved the patriotic heart of Count Clam and caused him partly to revise his political ideas. In Vienna, as everybody knows, a witticism is always found which seizes on the comic side of a serious situation. Accordingly, a witty explanation was very soon discovered for Count Clam's remarkable change of heart: he was suffering from "trench staggers."

Spitzmüller regarded it as his patriotic duty to place his expert knowledge on the subject of the Compromise at the disposal of the Government, and to join the Clam Cabinet as Minister of Finance; however, he retained full freedom of decision with regard to the Constitutional Proclamation. Very soon after this the change in the direction of foreign affairs was also accomplished.

## II

On 22nd December, 1916, Freiherr von Burian was replaced by the ex-Ambassador at Bucharest, Count Ottokar Czernin, as Minister of the Imperial House and Foreign Affairs. By this act the Emperor Karl made an appointment which both my observation and my conviction told me would be of fateful importance for him and the Monarchy. An evil fate had hung on the threads of the unfortunate Emperor's destiny the dead weight of a man whose influence ran like a stream of disaster through his whole reign. The opposition to Count Ottokar Czernin, into which the Emperor was ultimately driven, and the unfavourable reactions of this opposi-

tion on men's judgment of the Emperor in the high tide of republicanism are the reasons why I must give a full account of Czernin's character. Czernin is not an easy man to describe; his like do not grow on every bush. "Where light is strong, shadows are also strong." He was not lacking in gifts and talents, nor in understanding of the demands of modern times. Nevertheless, the bright sides of his nature were accompanied by the darkest shadows. He believed himself to be the statesman whom he brilliantly contrived, by an inimitable pose, to make himself appear. But he was not what he wanted to seem, and did seem, to be. He had never worked seriously, and had not at his command the degree of political experience and political knowledge he would have required for the difficult post he occupied. With his gifts he might perhaps have succeeded in remedying his deficiencies in a shorter time than others could; but he was hampered by his lack of self-discipline and industry, and, most of all, by his boundless over-estimation of himself. His faith in his outstanding talents and his political infallibility would never allow him to take anyone's advice. He believed in nothing but himself. He recognized no one as superior to himself, *ni Dieu ni maître*. We should undoubtedly have to go far back in history to find a case of a Minister in such a difficult position as the Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs during the War. This must be taken into consideration. Also, it is not possible to reconstruct the many factors, external and psychical, which determined Czernin's actions and failures of action in these difficult circumstances. Unless these factors can be taken into account, any judgment must to a certain extent be problematical. It is with these reservations, therefore, that I proceed to submit Czernin's official activities to a critical consideration, in which I shall as far as possible let the facts speak for themselves.

Who and what was Count Czernin when he took over this responsible position in the Empire? The scion of an old Bohemian family and married to a daughter of Prince Kinsky, in appearance the most distinguished type of Austrian "gentleman," the path to a brilliant career had been smoothed for him. In the year 1897, when he was twenty-five, he entered the diplomatic service without having sat for the prescribed

examination. A popular anecdote in this connection is so characteristic of Austrian conditions at that time that I must quote it. The son of Prince Kinsky had been received into the diplomatic service, quite contrary to the regulations, without having passed the diplomatic examination, on account of his high social position. When the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Count Goluchowski, refused to take Count Ottokar Czernin, Prince Kinsky's son-in-law, into the diplomatic service without examination, Prince Kinsky betook himself to Goluchowski, and, banging the table with his fist, said: "What kind of wretched protectionist business is this? You accept one and refuse the other." Intimidated by these somewhat savage arguments of the highly distinguished Prince, Count Goluchowski gave in, and, because Prince Kinsky's son had been accepted without examination, he now accepted his son-in-law, as a second exception, on the same conditions. It would, of course, be foolish to attach any particular weight to passing or not passing an examination; but it is characteristic of Count Czernin's nature that, at the very beginning of his public career, he contrived to cloak a lack of diligence and knowledge—there can be no other reason for the refusal to submit to examination—under the arrogant pose that he was not to be judged by the ordinary standards. His own social position, which was greatly enhanced by his marriage, enabled him to make this pose effective.

Count Czernin was assigned on probation to the Embassy at Paris. He did not take up the post, but resigned from the public service at the end of 1897. In September, 1898, he re-entered the public service, and served as attaché to our Embassy at Paris for about a year and a half, at the end of which period he took a year's leave without pay. In May, 1902, he was assigned to the Embassy at the Hague, and after two months' service there, on 29th June, 1902, he received the title of secretary of legation. In November of the same year, however, he had himself put on the retired list. He became a politician. The large landowners sent him as a delegate to the Bohemian Diet. In conjunction with political friends and party associates, he then proceeded to work for an understanding between the two races inhabiting Bohemia. The success of his political activity in the Diet was

nil. It could not have been otherwise. He was going the wrong way to work. The problem of Bohemia could not be solved in Bohemia, nor even within the limits of the Austrian lands. It was a problem of the Empire. That Count Czernin never realized. He was a frequent guest of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand. Whether from reasoned inner conviction or not—I cannot investigate the point—he became a supporter of the Greater Austrian idea. That ensured his position with the then heir-apparent. And Count Czernin was always a dazzling interpreter of his views. He also contrived to make many correct political diagnoses. Whether the means he recommended to others for remedying sharply and pertinently criticized abuses, or for reaching ends which were rightly applauded, were always serviceable and adequate, is another question. An article, entitled “The Preservation of Imperial Unity,” which he published in the *Österreichische Rundschau* in 1911, clearly shows the disproportion between the diagnostic and therapeutic abilities of the author. He correctly grasped the problem of imperial unity, and recommended for the leading rôle in the solution of this question—the nobility of Austria and Hungary. He was certainly no prophet when he wrote on this occasion: “The nobility of this Monarchy have still a political mission.” I regret profoundly that Czernin was not right, but even then I was unable to believe it, though I wished with all my heart it were true. With the strongly democratic trend of opinion in Austria, successful intervention by the nobles was simply out of the question. And in Hungary it was the nobles who were the real obstacle to a reorganization of the Monarchy.

In February, 1912, Count Czernin was elected a member of the Upper House. He had assuredly not yet performed any services which would have constitutionally justified his election to the House of Lords,<sup>1</sup> but, on account of the alleged agreement between his political views and those of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, he is supposed to have been the Archduke's candidate for the post of Minister for Foreign

<sup>1</sup> In accordance with § 5 of the Law of 21st December, 1864, No. 141 of the Imperial Statute Book, it remains reserved to the Emperor to appoint as life-members of the House of Lords distinguished men who have rendered service in State or Church, science or art.

Affairs. Count Czernin states in his book, *Im Weltkrieg*, that the Emperor Franz Joseph said to Stürgkh, the Prime Minister, when Czernin's name was suggested to him for appointment to the Upper House: "Yes, that is the man who is to be Minister for Foreign Affairs after my death." I do not wish to deny that Franz Ferdinand's intentions are correctly reported. But it is remarkable that, in a list of candidates for the various posts belonging to that period and obviously drawn up by Franz Ferdinand, Count Czernin's name is not mentioned among the numerous candidates for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but merely among the list of candidates for Governorships and departmental Ministries. Count Czernin made several speeches in the Upper House, in which he uttered platitudes with his native vigour. What he said was never original. And to retail truisms to the old experienced statesmen who sat in the Upper House was hardly necessary. Certainly neither the Upper House nor the Delegations was the ground on which Count Czernin could have won esteem. But he did not even play a significant part in these bodies. It is true that great hopes were set on him as the supposed future director of the foreign policy of the Monarchy. He was the pride of the Constitutional Party. He was placed in the foreground. But I have been unable to find any evidence that the ideas for the expression of which he was given the floor of the House ever took flight outside the walls in which he uttered them.

In October, 1913, Czernin became Ambassador at Bucharest. His appointment to this post was a hazardous enterprise, for up to that date he had only served for a little over two years in quite subordinate positions, and therefore could not possibly possess the experience which was indispensable for filling a diplomatic office so highly important to the Monarchy. In this post, however, he would doubtless have opportunity to display his distinguished gifts as a statesman.

In his book, *Im Weltkrieg*, Count Czernin himself relates the circumstances in which, when he entered on his post of ambassador at Bucharest, he renounced his political convictions. He describes the resentment felt at his appointment among the Hungarian public, and explains it by the fact that he had violently attacked Magyar policy in a pamphlet a few



years previously, and had given expression to the view that a policy of oppression of other nationalities would not be permanently tenable in Hungary. A "long and very candid discussion"<sup>1</sup> with Tisza had firmly convinced him, however, that a "subordinate official" could not enforce his own views, but that it was rather his duty, on taking up the post, to make himself a cog in the great machine of State. Correct though this view may be, the acceptance of a post involving the abandonment of political convictions was possible only to the mentality of a "subordinate official," not to that of a statesman; the *reservatio in pectore* to try to abide by the standpoint adopted was thus too Platonic to have any significance ascribed to it. But the then heir-apparent had begged him "to accept the post out of friendship for him." And so he accepted it. The "positive task" assigned to him was "first of all to investigate" whether the alliance between Austria and Rumania had "any practical value," and if he found that it had not, "to propose ways and means for giving it vitality." Count Czernin prefaces his description of his activities in Rumania with the remark that the Archduke Franz Ferdinand had drawn his Rumanophile sentiments "from a very unsatisfactory source." He means that Rumania had a "special charm" for him, because the Duchess of Hohenberg, on the occasion of her visit there, was treated as "her husband's consort and equal in accordance with traditional usage." I certainly do not wish to deny outright that this perhaps may have given Franz Ferdinand a certain prejudice in favour of Rumania; that was only human and natural. But when Count Czernin, perhaps only with the intention of enhancing the value of his book by an air of candour, lays special stress on this trifling human weakness of the Archduke, and even tries to make his readers believe that this circumstance was the only reason for the Archduke's friendship for Rumania, he is himself stamped as a cynical critic and a very superficial judge of men and situations. His account has no historical value whatever. To see that it is not in accordance with the facts, we have only to consider that the Archduke Franz Ferdinand had taken pains to be

<sup>1</sup> The words in quotation marks in this paragraph are quoted from Czernin's book, *Im Weltkrieg*.

thoroughly well informed from various sources—not, it is true, from Count Tisza—about the Rumanian question and its connection with the Hungarian, that is, the Transylvanian question, and that he was, as is fairly generally known, thoroughly conscious of the importance of this connection from his “Greater Austrian” point of view. Thus Count Czernin is incorrect when he writes: “He felt rather than knew that the Transylvanian question lay like a great boulder between Vienna and Bucharest, and that this boulder, once out of the way, would change the whole picture.” If anyone *knew* this, it was the Archduke Franz Ferdinand. It seems as if a slight confusion had crept in between Count Czernin’s own “feelings” and the knowledge of the then heir to the Throne.

The first part of his task, which, as already stated, was to discover whether the alliance had any practical value, the honourable ambassador rapidly discharged by reporting that the alliance had no more value than a “blank scrap of paper.” His predecessor had already reported in the same sense, only perhaps not quite so outspokenly. To the solution of the second part of his task, proposing ways and means whereby vitality might be infused into the alliance, Budapest was the obstacle, as Czernin himself states. Thus, with regard to the solution of this part of his task, his “word of honour,” given to Count Tisza when he accepted the post, prevented him from making any strenuous efforts to establish a policy opposed to that of Vienna and Budapest. Count Czernin might just as well have returned home again. But a circumstance arose which might have been of decisive importance for the destiny of the Monarchy, and which, at the same time, threw a lurid light on the pernicious nature of the Tisza policy. I quote from Czernin’s book, *Im Weltkrieg*, page 107:

“It is interesting and typical of the whole situation as it then was that shortly after I took up office in Rumania, the afterwards notorious war agitator, Nicolai Filipescu, proposed to me that Rumania should be united with Transylvania, and that this united Greater Rumania should then stand to the Monarchy in a relation approximating

to the relation of Bavaria to the German Empire. I candidly confess that I caught at this idea with the utmost eagerness. For, although it was launched from a side which had long been rightly regarded as most hostile to the Monarchy, there was no doubt that the moderate elements in Rumania would have seized on it with even greater satisfaction. I still believe even to-day that this idea, if it had been realized then, would have resulted in a real attachment of Rumania to the Monarchy, that the proclamation of the alliance would then have encountered no further opposition and that, in consequence, the outbreak of the Great War would have found us in quite a different position. Unfortunately the idea was wrecked in its very first stage by Tisza's harsh and sharp opposition. The Emperor Franz Joseph completely adopted Count Tisza's view, and it was quite impossible to effect anything by argument."

It is quite true that a realization of this proposal was inconceivable in the lifetime of the Emperor Franz Joseph. The Hungarian coronation oath kept the old Emperor fast in its bonds, and there was no combating Tisza's obstinacy. But, nevertheless, it was the moment to recognize clearly that Tisza rejected every idea which, if realized, might have preserved the life of the Monarchy. Just as he stubbornly opposed any solution of the Yugoslav question, as he raised the hatred of Serbia towards the Monarchy to boiling point by a customs policy adapted solely to the interests of the Magyar large landowners and thereby bred up for us a dangerous enemy, in the same way he contrived to prevent us from winning an ally in Rumania, as we certainly should have done if this proposal had been agreed to. This policy of Tisza's was as ruinous for the Monarchy as a whole as it was for Tisza's own Hungary, for whose exclusive advantage it had been devised. But Count Czernin, perhaps on account of his subordinate position, did not draw any conclusions from his realization that Tisza's policy could not be to the advantage of the Monarchy. To a statesman, however, from this moment no other attitude would have been possible but to abandon his "subordinate" post, and as a politician to throw all his weight into the fight against "Tisza's Hungary."

But instead of taking this dangerous path, Count Czernin preferred to remain at his post, and to wait until "this great idea should be realized in the reign of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand." Franz Ferdinand was murdered. The World War broke out. Count Czernin was unable to persuade Rumania to be true to her obligations as our ally; he could not even prevent her from declaring war on Austria-Hungary. So he had to content himself with informing Vienna in secret reports of what finally all the world saw was coming. Fidelity to his alliance on the part of King Karol, the entry of Bulgaria into the War on the side of the Central Powers at the time that the Russians, forced to retreat, had to look helplessly on at the destruction of Serbia, could, however, only have been retarding factors against the imminent outbreak of the "policy of national instinct," which found its interpreter in Take Jonescu and evoked an almost unanimous response in the Rumanian people. This "policy of national instinct" had its deepest causes, on the one hand, in the resentment of the Rumanians in the Empire against the customs policy which was advantageous only to the Hungarian large landowners and prejudicial to Rumania—a counterpart to the customs policy directed against Serbia—and, on the other hand, in the policy of national intolerance practised by Hungary and directed against the Hungarian Rumanians more than against any of the other nationalities. Although Count Tisza was never tired of denying it, I will call to mind certain facts, as a set-off to his assurances. In doing this, I cannot avoid going rather far back, as the treatment of the Rumanians in Hungary forms part of an inveterate system of Hungarian policy.

Koloman Tisza in his time flung the following words at a non-Magyar deputy in Parliament: "I will tread you under foot." Again, recall the case of General Trajan Doda, the "Memorandum Trial," the Magyar persecution to which Aurel Popovici was exposed, and the ruthless magyarization policy pursued by the Magyars. Recall the treatment meted out to the Rumanians in the Hungarian Parliament at the time of the Coalition Government. At that time the other nationalities were represented in the Hungarian Lower House by twenty-five members. Sosnosky describes how

they were treated, quoting his sources, in his book, *Die Politik im Hapsburger Reich*: "They were howled down, ordered to hold their tongues, and threatened with ejection. When the Rumanian deputy, Dr. Theodor Michali, complained that even the human rights of the nationalities were disregarded, the 'Magyar,' Meltzer, shouted at him: 'So far as you are concerned, we will not respect human rights.' When the Rumanian priest, Father Lucaciu, replied to the insult of 'coward' hurled at him by Deputy Rákovszky by saying that it was the man who insulted a priest who was a coward, because the priest could not demand satisfaction by arms, Rákovszky shouted at him: 'Shut up or I will box your ears.' The Magyar Press took the same tone towards the Rumanians. Thus the *Magyar Hirlap* for 22nd September, 1894, grumbled: 'It's a thousand pities that the excellent institution of the stake is obsolete. How thoroughly we could now solve the Vlach question and what a joyful sight it would be to see the heads of these cursed agitators on the point of a pole decorated with the national tricolour.'"

One could fill volumes with similar examples of the brutal treatment of the Rumanians by the Magyars. Anyone who wishes further information on the subject should read Aurel Popovici's book, *La question roumaine en Transylvanie et en Hongrie*. It is a collection of facts officially authenticated and capable of authentication. One's hair stands on end when one learns from this book how thoroughly the Magyars contrived to carry out Koloman Tisza's threat: "I will trample you under foot." The Magyars could never forget that the Rumanians under Jancu fought against the Magyar Revolution on the side of the Imperial troops in the years 1848-49, that Jancu resisted the blandishments of Kossuth, when he tried to entice away the Rumanians with the promise of autonomy and an army of their own, and that the Rumanians, in their successful defence of the Imperial cause, fought for the watchword: "It is our desire to belong not to Hungary or the Magyars, but to Austria and the Emperor."<sup>1</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> The Rumanians were opposed to the union of Transylvania with Hungary as proclaimed by the revolutionary Hungarian and Transylvanian Diet. They demanded the restoration of Transylvania as a province directly under the authority of the Emperor, as it was up to 1848.

Magyars could never forget that on 15th May, 1848, on the Field of Freedom (*campul libertatei*) near Blasendorf, twenty thousand Rumanians from all parts of Transylvania took the oath of allegiance to the Hapsburgs.

Who could wonder that the Monarchy lost all credit, when, instead of fulfilling its mission of being a sure refuge for the little nations, carelessly credulous of the Hungarian Government's protestations of innocence, and blindly relying on the infallibility of the Tisza policy, it permitted hatred for the "pillars of the throne" on the part of nationalities really friendly to the dynasty to be artificially nourished? Can we, in view of such a policy, continue to maintain that it was the enemy that destroyed our Monarchy? Did not we ourselves demolish it? How easy it was for foreign propaganda to work against us, when we supplied it with such rich material. Count Tisza, on the occasion of his expedition to Sarajevo, described the "right of self-determination for all nations" as the Entente catchword. Count Tisza was undoubtedly right. Wilson, with the consent of the Entente, threw the "right of self-determination" into Austria-Hungary like an incendiary torch. But the echo of this word came back from the nationalities, as from a thousand throats, in answer to the policy of Count Tisza and his associates. In such circumstances it could not but be clear to anyone who wished to see that if we kept on in this direction, the "policy of national instinct" must ultimately burst forth with elemental force, and that, when the screws were loosened after the death of our faithful ally, the aged King Karol, war with Rumania was inevitable. The subsequent declaration of war contained this sentence: "*Toutes les injustices qu'on faisait subir à nos frères ont entretenu entre notre pays et la monarchie un état continuuel d'animosité que les gouvernements du royaume n'arrivaient à apaiser qu'au prix de grandes difficultés et de nombreux sacrifices.*"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In March, 1914, the Emperor of Germany had a conversation with Count Tisza, in which the latter declared that he had had very friendly talks with the Rumanian leaders, and that in future he would, on his own initiative, take measures calculated to pacify the Rumanians. He had already met them on many points, and intended to make further concessions in regard to the Church and the schools, in which matters they had indeed been treated with unjustifiable harshness. He would assign public funds to

There is, of course, no intention of asserting that the unfair treatment of the Hungarian Rumanians by the Budapest Government was the sole cause of war; but it is beyond doubt that it did much to deepen the feeling of hostility against our Monarchy among the people of Rumania. It was Count Czernin's duty to use his influence to direct Hungarian policy towards the Hungarian Rumanians into another channel. If he did so, he assuredly did so with inadequate emphasis, for he actually remained in Bucharest until war was declared. The circumstances in which he departed are suspicious both for him and for his foresight as a statesman. The reports which Count Czernin sent to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs give an interesting and vivid picture of the extremely dramatic events which preceded the outbreak of War; I learned later, however, from officials of the Ministry for

the Rumanians for their schools. The course of the negotiations up to that date, and his firm determination to meet the Rumanians as far as was possible, justified the hope that in time the present, perhaps not unjustified, discontent of the Rumanians would disappear. The German Emperor pointed out that Rumania did not desire any "action on a grand scale" on the part of the Hungarian Government towards the Rumanians in Hungary, but concessions on small questions of administration and education were both necessary and useful. (Report of Tschirschky, the German Ambassador to the Foreign Office in Berlin, dated 23rd March, 1914.)

On the second day of the German Emperor's stay at Konopischt, 13th June, 1914, political discussions took place both before and after dinner between the Emperor and the heir-apparent, the Archduke Franz Ferdinand. The Archduke touched on Count Tisza and the Rumanians, and said that Tisza's actions were not in conformity with his words. The truth was that Tisza was a dictator in Hungary, and was trying to be one in Vienna also. "Even now Vienna trembles when Tisza gets on his legs, and everyone crawls on his belly when he gets out of the train at the station." It was Tisza's fault, went on the Archduke, that the interests of the Triple Alliance were badly served. It was he who, contrary to his assurances at Schönbrunn, oppressed the Hungarian Rumanians. Finally, the Archduke begged the German Emperor to instruct Tschirschky to remind Tisza at every opportunity never to lose sight of the necessity of winning over the Rumanians by proper treatment of their brothers in Hungary. The Emperor promised that he would instruct Tschirschky to keep on recalling Tisza's attention by the words: "Sir, think of the Rumanians!"

It was on this occasion also that Franz Ferdinand openly and in sharp terms found fault with Czernin's conduct in Bucharest, especially the famous "interview."

(Report of Treutler, envoy at the Imperial residence, on the conversation at Konopischt, dated 14th June, 1914.)

Foreign Affairs that the Red Book on the subject, which was censored by Count Czernin personally, does not afford a correct picture of the Count's diplomatic activities, and that the completion of this collection of documents by hitherto unpublished reports of Czernin's might modify the picture greatly to his disadvantage. Be that as it may, there is conflict with the published reports in the fact that Count Czernin, in a confidential circular issued by him shortly before the beginning of the War to the consular offices under his jurisdiction, on the grounds that "there was well-founded reason to hope that Rumania would remain neutral," gave strict injunctions to the heads of the offices to avoid anything that would cause uneasiness to the officials under them, and more especially to the Austrian colony in Rumania. As a result of this confidential circular, the consular offices, which were well informed from another quarter, were bound to abstain from advising their countrymen to leave Rumania in good time. Czernin is to blame for the fact that a large number of Austrians and Hungarians, with their wives and children, were detained and interned by the Rumanian authorities, and exposed to extreme privation and misery. In these circumstances it is not surprising that this confidential circular was passed over in silence in the Red Book, in the compilation of which, as I have already mentioned, Czernin himself collaborated. In any case, he seems to have proved singularly lacking in the necessary consideration for our compatriots in Rumania. The Emperor Franz Joseph was extremely indignant with Czernin on this account at the time.

These things were unknown to me at the time. I was one of the many who were taken in, and must confess that, although Czernin had suffered an essential defeat in Rumania, I welcomed his appointment as Minister for Foreign Affairs; I regarded him as representative of the greater Austrian idea, which he had supported in his journalistic writings, and I hoped that, now that he was called to a position of leadership, he would endeavour to overcome and succeed in overcoming the obstacles to the realization of his programme. I did not know that he had transferred his allegiance to the mortal enemy of the greater Austrian idea. Nor could I suppose that he had been disloyal to his principles merely in order to play a part in politics.



Moreover, it was extremely curious that Count Czernin, in a speech which he made to a gathering of the officials of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs on his assumption of office, declared that he "naturally took his stand firmly on the Compromise of 1867 and regarded strict equality between Austria and Hungary as the basis of his activities." Since it was unnecessary for a Minister to make a formal avowal that he took his stand on existing legislation—quite apart from the fact that a few hours previously he had placed his oath of allegiance to it in the hands of the Emperor—this declaration could only mean that he either voluntarily or under compulsion was saying "Pater, peccavi" to Hungary. The Greater Austrian, which he had so long professed to be, thus made his obeisance irrevocably to his worst enemy, dualism.<sup>1</sup> His own statements confirm this completely. He had recognized dualism to be harmful and the policy of Count Tisza to be fatal; nevertheless, on assuming the office in which he no longer needed to subordinate his convictions to those of others, he made a formal avowal of the inviolability of dualism, concluded a friendly alliance with Count Tisza, and for the rest contented himself with an occasional exchange of views with Tisza, and that on questions which, compared with the great problems of the Monarchy, must be regarded as of very little importance. In these great problems, however, in the vital questions of the Monarchy, which would have called for convictions, clear and firm guiding principles, a difficult struggle, in brief for real statesmanlike work, he was completely under the thumb of his master, Count Tisza. Count Czernin himself gives the explanation of his submission to the will of Tisza, when he states that "during the War open warfare against Budapest was naturally impossible." This was a great mistake, which could have been made only by one who did not know Hungary and was committed to belief in the correctness of the representations of Hungarian politicians and the Magyar press. War against Tisza—and

<sup>1</sup> Count Apponyi, in an article in the *Pester Lloyd*, declared that it was impossible to forget the political antecedents which had caused the Hungarians to oppose even his appointment as ambassador in Bucharest. It also seemed to him impossible that a man who stood for these views should occupy a post which in a certain sense placed him at the centre of the dualistic organization.

it would certainly have come to that—was dangerous, highly inconvenient, and to be dared only by one who had completely mastered the Hungarian problem. It is characteristic of Count Czernin that he preferred to subordinate himself to Tisza, who passed among the wrongly-informed public as the greatest statesman in the Monarchy, and who had usurped the chief power not only in Hungary, but also over the whole Empire, and merely to reserve for himself liberty to criticize after the event, rather than to wage against him a war which would at the least have been inconvenient, and thus hazard his own position.

It is exactly the same part as that which he played with the Pan-Germans. He opposed and he warned, he expressed apprehensions and composed *exposés*, he found fault and dared Platonic attacks—but he toed the line. And because Count Czernin disowned the political ideas to which alone he owed his reputation on the political platform, his figure lost all trace of political relief; he himself, as it were, wiped out the faint outlines of a self-advertising personality. He made a confession of faith in the infallibility of the dualistic form of government, Count Tisza could assure all anxious Magyars of the perfection of his understanding with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the same hollow-sounding phrases were exchanged with the chancellors of the allied powers as had been heard *ad nauseam* in the various combinations of a limited vocabulary during two years of War. People leaned back bored in their arm-chairs and could do nothing but twiddle their thumbs resignedly. There was indeed nothing to hope for. Everything remained unchanged. We stuck to the accustomed phrases, the “sound foundations of the Monarchy,” “shoulder to shoulder,” “sticking it out” until an “honourable peace,” on which we went on nourishing ourselves until—the end came.

Count Czernin, because he had been one of the former intimates of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, was in the front rank of those to be taken into consideration as advisers to the Emperor Karl. He had managed to keep himself in the foreground, and to deceive the public about his real worth. The thing that produced a pleasing effect in the early days of his tenure of office and which gained him a certain measure of

popularity, was the boldness with which he easily overcame old deep-rooted prejudices and obstacles which seemed insurmountable to others. He had the power of recognizing what was false and unsound and of fighting it with words. He was a master of destruction, but he lacked the knowledge and experience for constructive work. His influence in all directions was merely destructive and disintegrating; he worked only with criticisms and negations. Since all his enterprises, always begun with the impetuosity native to him, came to grief, because he failed to realize the difficulties which stood in the way and the consequences they occasioned, he was perpetually changing his guiding principles, and fell into the greatest error of which a statesman can be guilty: he became unreliable. He could not bear to be put in the wrong by events, and so lapsed into the most questionable practices in order to save his reputation as an infallible statesman. His attitude to things was, in fact, purely ego-centric, and concerned exclusively with their reactions on himself.

Very soon after he took up his post in the Ballhausplatz he endeavoured to get into touch with the press. He was successful in getting Moritz Benedikt, the chief editor of the *Neue Freie Presse*, appointed a member of the Upper House. I regarded this step as just and shrewd in itself, although I should have liked to see the same distinction granted to the worthy president of the International Press Association and chief editor of the *Neues Wiener Tageblatt*, Wilhelm Singer. The measure would in this way have acquired the character of an honour to the press in general. The intention was that Benedikt should support the policy of the Foreign Office in his paper, which was not only one of the leading Austrian newspapers, but enjoyed a wide circulation abroad. In reality the exact opposite happened: Count Czernin carried out the policy of the *Neue Freie Presse*.

At the outset of his official activities, Czernin also felt the need of a good introduction to industrial and financial circles. He invited the most eminent representatives of these circles to a sort of meeting at the Foreign Office, and made a speech to the assembled gathering, in which he said that he attached great importance to getting into direct contact with all circles of public life and keeping them in touch with the situation

abroad. Thereupon, far from being guilty of any indiscretions, he proceeded to give them information which could only have been news to very few of those present. The intelligent ones shook their heads, and could not think what was the real significance of this comedy. When a representative of industry, during the discussion which followed the speech, drew the Minister's attention to the fact that industry was often seriously hampered in its work by the bureaucratic delays of the Military Administration, and asked that this state of affairs might be remedied, Count Czernin stated that he was not in a position to accede to this demand since it was a matter for the Military Administration and not for his department. He was bound to observe absolute respect for the functions of the various departments. He himself would deprecate any interference by, say, the Austrian or Hungarian Prime Minister in the affairs of the Foreign Office, and so he was bound to repudiate any demand which involved his interfering in the affairs of another department. Count Czernin must have been gratified to learn for the first time from one of the Hungarians who were present that the Constitution empowered the Hungarian Prime Minister to advise in foreign affairs. Thus our Minister for Foreign Affairs first learnt by chance at a meeting of this fundamental constitutional provision affecting the Foreign Office, of which he makes special mention in his book.

The unbounded and quite unjustified arrogance of Count Czernin had evil consequences. It prevented him from taking the right attitude to the Emperor. The fact that Czernin, for all his ambition, was the opposite of a Court climber, toady or flatterer, influenced the Emperor greatly in his favour. But he adopted the pose of pride before the thrones of princes, which was entirely out of place with a man of such natural and modest disposition as the Emperor. He carried this alleged pride to the length of most unbecoming presumption. He imagined he could put himself on the same social level as the Emperor. He lacked the proper sense of distance. The tone which he adopted in making his reports was almost always irritating and unpleasant. "It is becoming almost impossible to put up with Count Czernin," said the Emperor, "and yet I cannot dismiss him in the middle of the

War. He gives me notice once a fortnight, and he is so flighty and desultory that it is almost impossible to work peacefully with him any longer." The Emperor said this or something like it repeatedly. I was disgusted when, in the spring of 1917, the aide-de-camp on duty told me that the Emperor had summoned Count Czernin to report the following day, and the Minister had replied by asking him to inform the Emperor that he was going to shoot black-cock to-morrow; but for that he would certainly have conferred with the Emperor. And he did not come to report; he went after his black-cock. That was the rôle of Marquis Posa, the man who could not be a courtier.

But it was not only in the matter of external forms, but also on the intellectual plane, that Count Czernin adopted the wrong attitude to the Emperor. Czernin had known him only very slightly before he came to the Throne. Nor did he know the environment in which the Emperor had grown up. He regarded him merely as a young Archduke whom quite unforeseen events had brought to the Throne, who had done a short period of military service, but could not have either been prepared or trained for his high calling. So Count Czernin believed it to be his mission to instruct the young ruler in the art of Government. He over-estimated his own abilities and under-estimated those of his Imperial master, who undoubtedly was the more able of the two in intuitive grasp of the right aims to be pursued. Czernin, however, was the "responsible" Minister, who, from a correct judgment of the position, which was indeed not difficult, with knowledge of all the facts and decisive factors, could never gird himself to action. Instead of following the Imperial policy, which certainly would have been the better one, instead of supporting and helping the Emperor, he tried to hinder him in everything and to stifle his intuitively correct impulses. Thus by his fatiguing opposition and his threats and alarms, he robbed the Emperor of all self-confidence and assurance. In my opinion, Count Czernin's whole political conception was entirely wrong. The principle he enunciated, that domestic policy had to be guided by foreign policy, may have been applicable for all (other) States, but for Austria-Hungary the exact opposite was the proper course. With us,

foreign policy had to be guided by internal tendencies. The parcelling-out of the Monarchy, its dissolution into sectional States, was the automatic result of this mistaken political orientation. I shall subject Count Czernin's activities to detailed discussion in the various passages of my book to which the subject belongs, and shall conclude this provisional sketch of his character by saying that, according to my observations and my view of things, Czernin was not the man he thought he was and made himself out to be. He had the bearing and also many of the attributes of a statesman without really being one. I, at least, have always been unable to regard him as such, just as I never take even the most brilliant actor, however well he may play the part of the King, for a King. I have described Count Czernin's personality at such great length, and shall recur to him repeatedly in the pages that follow, because the reign of the Emperor Karl cannot be rightly understood without an accurate knowledge of his character and his influence on the course of events.

The appointment of Count Czernin, that is, of an Austrian as Minister for Foreign Affairs, made it necessary, in order to restore equality between Austria and Hungary, that a Hungarian should be appointed to the post of common Minister of Finance. Prince Konrad Hohenlohe, whom the Emperor designed for the position of First Court Chamberlain, and who was very soon actually appointed to the post, was removed from the office of common Minister of Finance, and replaced by Freiherr von Burian, Count Czernin's predecessor.

Three new men were moved close to the Throne, Prince Hohenlohe, Count Czernin, and Count Clam-Martinitz. All three had belonged to the Belvedere circle, to the intimate friends of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand. This was a very remarkable fact, and caused great agitation in Hungary. And yet the choice had no connection whatever with the plans of the murdered Archduke.

The tall figure of the Hungarian Prime Minister, Count Tisza, stood out imposingly against this triumvirate of ex-"Greater Austrians."

## CHAPTER VI

### COUNT TISZA AND THE JUGOSLAV QUESTION, WITH SOME OBSERVATIONS ON WAR GUILT

#### I

SOON after the coronation festivities, a Yugoslav politician called on me to give me the following information. During the occupation of Serbia by Mackensen's Army, the Austro-Hungarian military administration discovered in Belgrade certain documents of the "Narodna Odbrana," which seriously compromised political friends of Count Tisza and the Banus, Baron Skerlec. Documents belonging to the Serbian Prime Minister, Pasić, were also discovered at the same time; they included a list of confidential agents, containing the names of agents of the Hungarian Prime Minister, Deputy Professor Szurmin, Baron Rajacsics and the two deputies, Svetislav Popović and the Agram journalist, Veceslav Wilder. These documents showed that they and other active politicians and leaders of the Serbo-Croat Coalition had been acting as spies and sending reports to the "Narodna Odbrana," and that Deputy Professor Szurmin, who was in close political alliance with Count Tisza, had been supporting with money young men who were involved in the Sarajevo murder. Moreover, there were in the archives of the Agram police papers relating to official negotiations held in the house of Professor Szurmin; they were discovered as the result of an anonymous communication to the effect that two boxes full of papers had been secretly carried down into the cellar. The police had seized the boxes and found in them very compromising documents, whereupon Szurmin had been arrested. However, when the Government learnt of this arrest, they ordered the release of Szurmin, and the whole affair was then hushed up. Next to Professor Szurmin, Baron Rajacsics was the person most seriously compromised. Count Julius Andrássy was also aware of the discovery of those compromising documents;

he had examined the dossier. The matter ought to be brought up for discussion in the Hungarian Lower House at an early date.

In reply to these revelations I at once observed that documents of this kind could not be regarded as authentic without further proofs. They might easily be forged. Experience in the Friedjung case and other incidents in Croatia made it necessary to be very cautious about dossiers of this kind. The Yugoslav deputy objected that in this case we were not dealing with single documents, which certainly might be forged, but with a series of facts and documents which supplemented each other, and which were so varied that the possibility of a hoax seemed almost out of the question. In spite of this, I maintained my attitude of reserve, but thanked the deputy for his extraordinarily interesting statement, and promised to bring the matter to the notice of the proper authorities, if it were not made public.

In March, 1917, Deputy von Szmrecsányi brought the matter up in an interpellation in the Hungarian Parliament. The interpellation was reported only very briefly in the newspapers, with the exception of the Hungarian opposition journals, and the public was therefore imperfectly informed about it. The charges brought by Szmrecsányi against members of the Serbo-Croat Coalition, against political friends of Count Tisza, and, particularly, against the Banus, Baron Skerlec, were as follows:

1. Deputy Dr. Hinković, the chief defendant in the Agram case, member of the Serbo-Croat Coalition, is a political friend of the Banus, Baron Skerlec. Under the Banus Tomasić, he was legally sentenced for incitation, fled abroad, to return when Skerlec became Banus. He became a member of Skerlec's political club and a deputy. After the Sarajevo murder, Hinković, who was generally regarded as a Serbian spy, travelled to Switzerland with a regular passport; from there he went on to Paris, where he is one of the most active members of the Yugoslav Committee. He is in receipt of regular pay from the Serbian Government, but, in addition, his salary as a member of the Hungarian Lower House is sent to him in Switzerland.



2. In the occupied Serbian area the military authorities found documents belonging to the Serbian Government, which had fled, and the documents of the "Narodna Odbrana" up to the year 1913, which they examined, thus bringing to light most disquieting facts. From this mass of material, Szmrecsányi mentioned the names of the persons most gravely compromised, who were at once the political supporters and friends of the Prime Minister, Count Tisza, and of the Banus. He submitted a list, a copy of the original, which was found among the papers of Pasić, the Serbian Prime Minister. This list contained the names, designated by Pasić himself as his agents in Hungary, of seven Hungarian citizens, six of whom, Svetislav Popović, Veceslav Wilder, Georg Szurmin, Srgijam Budisavljević, Dr. Ivan Lorković, and Baron Rajacsics, were members of the Hungarian Parliament.

3. The military authorities found among the papers a report addressed to the Serbian Minister of War by the Chief of Police in Belgrade, of which the contents were as follows:

"The administration yesterday received a letter from Carloza from a Serb, which read as follows: 'The situation there is critical, but we Serbs do not worry about it, but are awaiting the fall of Skutari longingly and with the greatest impatience, regardless of the fact that a royal Commissariat exists in Croatia-Slavonia.'

"We observe that manifestations have taken place in Croatia and Syrmia. I have also learned from Baron Rajacsics that a very large body of artillery is concentrated at Sarajevo, also that cavalry and infantry, which is marched through the Herzegovina mostly at night, is concentrated at Mostar, Foca and Gorasda and the surrounding districts."

Szmrecsányi laid a photograph of the original document on the Table of the House. This same deputy, Baron Rajacsics, on 23rd July, 1914, made a speech in the Hungarian Parliament in defence of the "Narodna Odbrana," which was punctuated with expressions of agreement and applause from the National Work Party. Count Tisza also afterwards shook hands with the speaker.

4. Among the papers of Major Voja Tankosić, who instructed the Sarajevo assassins in bomb throwing, were found two letters from Deputy Professor Szurmin to a student named Bukovac, in which Szurmin sent thirty kronen to Bukovac, who had gone to Belgrade, in order that he might, with Szurmin's help, attend a comitat school belonging to the "Narodna Odbrana."

5. The records of the Agram police also show that, a few days after the Sarajevo crime, the Agram police, in response to an anonymous communication, searched the house of Professor Szurmin. There they found and took possession of allegedly compromising documents, including some drawn up in the State cipher code. They thereupon arrested Georg Szurmin, but were obliged to release him on instructions from the Provincial Government. In spite of pressure from the police, no proceedings have been taken against Szurmin.

I immediately felt the greatest suspicion about this dossier, although I would not have trusted myself to declare with such absolute certainty as Count Stephan Tisza did in reply to the interpellation of Deputy von Szmrecsányi that the documents were a hoax. Later I learnt that the most compromising papers were supposed to have been fabricated, in order to be handed over to the military authorities, by people in Belgrade who were apparently working in the interests of the Nikola Pašić Government, which had been expelled from the country. The exposure was chiefly due to the Vienna publicist, Leopold Mandl, one of the best authorities on Yugoslav conditions, who hurried to Belgrade immediately after the discovery of the dossier, and not only proved the documents found to be a forgery *en bloc*, but also ascertained the names of the authors, who were made to pay dearly for it by the military authorities they had duped.

But, although it may be probable that the documents which Deputy von Szmrecsányi laid before the Hungarian Reichstag were forgeries, nevertheless, it was very curious that the explanation which Count Tisza promised to the Reichstag in the "immediate future" with regard to the other incriminating statements was never given, although the interpellation made serious accusations not only against deputies, but also

against the Hungarian Government. Such an explanation was all the more necessary since the suspicions mentioned in the interpellation could have been brought into harmony with the attitude of the political leaders of Hungary. I will leave out of account the factor of treachery because of the probability that certain documents were forged.

## II

In order to make my readers understand the peculiar relation of the Hungarian Government to the Serbs in Austria-Hungary, it will be necessary to explain the Yugoslav problem, so far as this can be done in a brief space.

The Yugoslav question, both before and during the War, was always in the foreground of political discussion. Every politician spoke of this question and of the necessity of solving it. Positive proposals for solving it on these or those lines were put forward. But if one looked closer and tried to go into the subject more thoroughly, one discovered that in most cases every politician understood the Yugoslav question intuitively as a vital question of the Monarchy rather than on the basis of ideas properly thought out, and that the proposals for its solution were only in rare cases founded on positive knowledge of the extremely confused state of affairs.

The Yugoslav question was undoubtedly one of the most difficult problems of the former Monarchy, not only because it affected both halves of the Empire, and because—in so far as Hungary was concerned—the obligation of the Crown to preserve the integrity of the lands as guaranteed by the Constitution was an obstacle to its solution, but also because of the variety and fluidity of political opinions and aspirations in the Yugoslavlands themselves, in which, in addition to purely political factors, the antagonism between the Catholic Croats and the Orthodox Slavs played the chief part. The question was also complicated from the point of view of internal policy by the constitutional analogy with the aspirations of the Czechs, by its connection with the national conditions of the Southern districts of the lands comprised in the Reichsrat,

and, from the point of view of foreign policy, by the traditional ambitions of Italy towards the east coast of the Adriatic. But the factor that contributed most to obscuring the problem was the policy of Hungary towards the Serbs. This policy was a peculiar double game. While, on the one hand, the leading Magyar politicians, by hermetically sealing the frontiers of Hungary against the import of agricultural products from Serbia, brought the hatred of the Serbs for the Monarchy to boiling point,<sup>1</sup> on the other hand, they favoured the Serbs in Hungary. The Serbian deputies in the Hungarian Reichstag were one of the mainstays of the Government of Count Tisza, although their active relations with their fellow-countrymen belonging to the Kingdom and their Greater Serbian tendencies, which were hostile to the Monarchy, were well known to the Hungarian Government.

The movement for the unification of all the Southern Slav races, which arose about the middle of the nineteenth century under the name of "Illyrism," filled the Magyars with anxiety. These ambitions had to be crushed, or at least directed into channels which could not injure the idea of a Greater Hungary. In the year 1848 the Croats advanced a demand for the union of Croatia, Slavonia, Dalmatia, and the Military Frontier Province as a single independent State. Henceforward, this demand was their political watchword. They knew that their end could be attained only through Vienna and against the will of Budapest. This laid the foundation for their Austrian and anti-Magyar attitude, which was always firmly maintained through the decades that followed. But the Croats waited in vain for assistance from Vienna. Vienna had no understanding of the elemental force of national desires. The Yugoslav question culminated on the one hand in the natural and powerful ambition of the Yugoslavs to unite, and united, to force their way to the coast of the Adriatic, and, on the other, in the conflict between this ambition, in the realization of which millions of Slavs were interested, and the obstacles put in the way of its realization

<sup>1</sup> It is frequently stated that the Serbian politicians played the part of *agents provocateurs*, to stir up the country against Hungary. This may be to some extent true, but it does not excuse the attitude of the Hungarian Government.

out of constitutional considerations and fear of the Hungarian leaders. So it was natural that in the course of time the Yugoslav question assumed a different form. The change was not to the advantage of Austria. That was quite natural: influences hostile to Austria were allowed to work unchecked. The Russian influence from outside and the influence of Magyar policy, which mobilized the Serbs against the Croats, transformed the Yugoslav question, which was originally controlled by the Croats and directed solely against the internal structure of the Monarchy, into a Greater Serbian movement, which threatened the Monarchy from without in its most vulnerable spot. This movement, which, centred in Belgrade, was directed against the West, and which was all the more dangerous for Austria because it drew the old Yugoslav aspirations for unity within its magic circle, and was fraternally connected with the Pan-Slav movement, might for long have been opposed by a force which, originating within the Monarchy, would have had its effect on the East. The goal would have been the same. What the Greater Serbs were aiming at to our detriment, the Croats might have attained even with advantage to us. The holders of power in Hungary were afraid lest Vienna might realize this. Hence the favour shown to the Serbs.

Hungarian policy, however, pursued still another aim. They wished *via facti* to modify the Croat-Hungarian Compromise in favour of their Greater Hungarian ambitions, to prepare the Yugoslav soil for magyarization (beginning with the magyarization of the railways), in order ultimately to "solve" the Yugoslav question on Greater Hungarian lines. In order to reach this goal, they began by fanning the flame of the hostility between the Catholic Croats and the Orthodox Serbs,<sup>1</sup> and favoured the latter in every conceivable way, by establishing Serbian schools, altering the electoral survey in their favour, and supporting the peculiarly Serbian nationalism. The Greater Serbian movement began. Its leaders on the Serbian side were the brothers Pribicević, those on the

<sup>1</sup> This, of course, applies only to the Serbs in the Kingdom of Croatia-Slavonia; the half million Serbs in Hungary proper (Bacska and the Banat) were treated quite differently, according to the receipt for the other nationalities.

Croatian side, graduates from the Masaryk school, Wilder, Lukinić, etc. The movement was directed against the Greater Hungarian aspirations. The Croats were to unite with the Serbs. The Serbo-Croat Coalition arose.<sup>1</sup> What its tendencies were was fully explained by the leading party newspapers. The chief organ of the Serbian section of the Serbo-Croat Coalition, the *Srbobran*, wrote on 9th September, 1907, that the policy of Belgrade alone was authoritative for the Serbs in Croatia, while the chief official organ of the Croat section, the *Pokret*, on 30th April, 1908, came out for the union of the Croat lands in Greater Serbia. Such were the openly avowed tendencies of the Serbo-Croat Coalition, the party in which the Government of Count Tisza found support, and to which Tisza conceded all the powers of a Government Party. The section of the Croats who were loyal to Austria and the dynasty were driven to the wall and waited in vain for help from Vienna.

But why did the Serbo-Croat Coalition, which, as the Yugoslav Party of the Monarchy, had set its face against Greater Hungarian tendencies, take refuge under the wing of the Hungarian Government? This question is easy to answer. The Serbs said to themselves: We have no future until the Monarchy is demolished. We place ourselves under the protection of the crown of St. Stephen in order, on the one hand, to weaken the section of the Croats who are loyal to the Hapsburgs, and with them Austria also, and, on the other hand, under its protection, to be able to pursue our aims unmolested. It is more difficult to answer the question how it was possible for them, the mortal enemies of the Magyars, to be allowed to shelter under the wing of the Hungarian Government. They could not have done it except by imposing upon the holders of power in Hungary by formally adopting the standpoint of the Government, that is, of the Compromise, and revealing only that part of their programme which was attractive to the Magyars, their fight against the danger of a Greater Croatian movement. The Serbian deputies in the

<sup>1</sup> The change over from the old Unionist Party to the Serbo-Croat Coalition took place, it is true, under the Coalition (Polonyi) Government, but it was taken over by the National Work Party (Khuen-Héderváry, Tisza).

Hungarian Reichstag naturally took great care to show their aspirations towards a Greater Serbia to their Hungarian political friends, Tisza and Skerlecz, only from the angle of a possible solution of the South Slav question along anti-Austrian lines. As all treacherous designs were *a priori* impossible to the sterling character of Count Tisza, he was bound to be their dupe. There is evidence of this in the fiasco of his last political encounter at Sarajevo. He believed to the end in the possibility of a solution of the Yugoslav question in accordance with the desires of Hungary, and in the possibility of checking neo-Slav designs. Any street urchin could have taught him better. But he clung wilfully to his opinion. When he came to Sarajevo with his Hungarian proposals, and received in answer the Yugoslav programme, he may have had a faint glimmering of the fact that he had lost the game. To his question how the Serbs envisaged the state of affairs when the War was over, the Burgomaster of Mostar replied: "What's that you ask, sir? If you are victorious, you won't ask us; if the Entente are victorious, we won't ask you."

The Emperor Karl, as always, took a standpoint on the Yugoslav question which was entirely correct and in accordance with natural rights. He realized intuitively the attitude that the dynasty must take, and was absolutely convinced of the necessity of solving the problem in accordance with the primitive aspirations of the Yugoslavs. With regard to Dalmatia in particular, he said to me repeatedly that the constitutionally obscure question of the grouping of this country was one of the many burdens of his inheritance. In no circumstances, however, must Dalmatia again be abandoned to impoverishment by prevention of the union of this broad maritime district with the country behind it, on account of political difficulties or constitutional objections. The important thing was to alleviate the poverty of the population. This must in all circumstances be given precedence of constitutional questions. The separation of Dalmatia from the other Croat lands, together with the unfortunate wine clause in the Commercial Treaty of 1892, which had been concluded under pressure from the German Empire, was the cause of the poverty of Dalmatia. The Emperor Karl regarded it as his sovereign duty to do away with this poverty.

The Emperor Karl, however, was also aware that the antagonism of the Yugoslavs to the Magyars was much too deeply-rooted to permit of Count Tisza's securing the union of the Yugoslavs on Greater Hungarian lines, and thus solving the Yugoslav problem. Count Tisza did not fear Serbia in foreign politics, because he thought the defeat of the Central Powers was an impossibility. After a victorious ending to the War he would have dropped the Serbs. He believed that he would then be able, with the help of the Croats, to solve the South Slav question in accordance with the desires of Hungary. He refused to be enlightened. So the Emperor Karl sent him to Sarajevo, furnishing him with full powers, so that Tisza himself might be convinced of the impracticability of his political ideas. The Emperor proved to be right. I do not know whether, at that date, so near the day of the disruption within the Monarchy, the Yugoslav question could have been solved at all. I lack the data necessary for forming a judgment. But I do know that in the year 1917, at the time when I held the office of chief private secretary to the Emperor, to judge by the unanimous opinions of many influential Yugoslav politicians with whom I had an opportunity to discuss the matter, the problem might very well have been solved. But it would have been childish to believe that the solution could have been accomplished except in conjunction with the Bohemian, Polish, and Ruthenian questions. Austrian problems could only have been solved in their entirety by an alteration of 180° in the political course. Count Czernin made the mistake of believing that he could deal with the Polish question independently of the other problems of the Monarchy. The answer to the "premature disclosure" of the Austrophile solution of the Polish question was the deployment of the nationalities in the memorable session of the Austrian Lower House on 11th November, 1917. A few days before my retirement, I received a letter from the then Minister, Dr. Ritter von Zolger, who was in the House on that occasion, in which he wrote: "Anyone who was present at the session as I was and carefully followed the speeches and their psychological background, must acknowledge that this deployment of the nationalities was a very, very serious business. It was not theatrical thunder, but actual life, which



fears nothing and is prepared for anything. The attempt at a separate solution of the Polish question is not only hopeless, but conceals in itself dangers of which those who absolutely refuse to learn anything have not the remotest conception."

The position was the same with regard to the solution of the Yugoslav question. The difficulties were considerably increased by dualism. Since the year 1867, a development which led to the forging of the Hungarian-Croat Compromise of 1868 (the Fiume question) and to the refusal of political rights to the non-Magyar nations living in Hungary had taken its fatal course. This mistaken Magyar policy had directly strengthened national consciousness in the Yugoslavs, in which originated the demand for a uniform State organization, which was opposed both by the Magyars and the Germans in Austria. So long as Serbia was occupied with her domestic affairs and Austria and Germany were predominant in Europe, the necessity for a solution of the Yugoslav problem did not make itself felt so much. But it became all the more urgent when, on account of Austrian slackness and *laissez-faire*, the Obrenović dynasty was destroyed by murder and the Karageorgević dynasty was free to return to the Throne of Serbia. From this moment onwards, the solution of the Yugoslav problem within the framework of European civilization, which is the same thing as solution within the framework of the Hapsburg Monarchy, became urgent and imperative.

Since the year 1903, the Yugoslav problem was the problem *κατ' ἐξοχήν* in the Hapsburg Monarchy. The solution was equally necessary for Cisleithania as for Transleithania. There were numerous politicians in Austria who professed this view. But there was a remarkable lack of books on the subject, so that they had to get their information largely from the works of foreign publicists, which were of a wholly tendentious nature and the product of dilettante writers. In Hungary, however, the politicians continued to bury their heads in the sand like ostriches, and to deny the burning actuality of the Yugoslav question. They were still denying it when the flames of the world conflagration were already licking at the Hapsburg Empire.

The solution of the Yugoslav problem was rendered con-

siderably more difficult for the Crown at the end, because the Emperor Karl, by the coronation oath, or, rather, by the signing of the Inaugural Diploma, was bound to preserve the integrity of the lands of the Hungarian Crown. This made the Emperor's position on the burning Yugoslav question nothing short of desperate. As the Emperor Karl saw quite clearly, everyone was bound to realize that the Hungarian solution was impracticable. He had been prevented from taking the initiative in discovering another solution by Tisza, who had taken advantage of the Emperor's inexperience to precipitate the coronation. The Emperor knew that on the Yugoslav question depended not only the continuance of his Empire, but also the peace on which his whole heart was set. But Count Stephan Tisza's short-sighted vision could not discern the frightful danger to Hungary threatened by a stubborn adherence to the principles of his policy. The following remarks made on the subject by Freiherr von Spitzmüller in the Political Association on 18th January, 1919, were perfectly to the point: "In the Yugoslav question, a timely solution of which could alone have stopped the break-up of the Monarchy, Hungary developed an obstinate spirit, which was truly remarkable. It went to such lengths that the Hungarian Prime Minister, Dr. Wekerle, tackled the question from a side on which he must have been very sensitive: 'I ask you, does Hungary want to remain the only State in Europe which is a national and political anachronism?' Hungary, during the period when I was common Minister of Finance, veritably sabotaged the Yugoslav question to the utmost of its powers. Even at the beginning of October, 1918, according to the impressions I received from conversations with Yugoslav politicians, the prospect of arriving at a solution of this question within the framework of the Monarchy was still not hopeless. But a tragic fate held sway in this sphere. I had known since July, 1917, that the Emperor favoured a trialistic solution of the Yugoslav question, and was supporting it with expert knowledge. But the Hungarian coronation oath was fatal to him; it prevented him, given his extraordinarily conscientious character, from even issuing a proclamation which might have tampered with the integrity of the lands of the Hungarian Crown. It

may be stated in particular that the Hungarian Government is seriously to blame for the complete breakdown of the manifesto policy. I do not wish to discuss this matter more fully, on the one hand, because I am not responsible for it, although I saw the unrolling of the various stages in its development, and, on the other hand, because I know that there was a conflict of opinion on the subject of the manifesto policy which cannot be discussed in detail even to-day. I confine myself to stating that I made appreciably different proposals with regard to the carrying out of a manifesto policy, and that, in any case, the manifesto contained one passage which was fatal to it, I refer to the passage which stated that the integrity of the lands of the Hungarian Crown must be preserved. Competent Yugoslav politicians said to me that, when this passage became known in Agram and Sarajevo, people said: 'This is the end, for it is clear that Vienna has abandoned us.' The issue of a manifesto on the subject of the settlement of the Yugoslav question had been long under discussion. I supported it with the utmost vigour, as did also Baron Hussarek and Baron Sarkotić. The Hungarian statesmen prevented its issue, and the result was that a manifesto was published in Austria containing the 'integrity' passage which made any adequate solution of the Yugoslav question quite impossible. Baron Hussarek retained this passage, because Dr. Wekerle threatened to stop the despatch of food supplies, unless it remained in the manifesto."

How does the procedure of Count Stephan Tisza in this perilous time tally with his self-proclaimed high sense of responsibility? How can we explain the fact that among the Hungarian statesmen and politicians not a single voice was raised in warning against the wrong path that was still being followed, although the abyss to which it led was already discernible? Only for the reason that, incredible as it may sound, not one of all the Hungarian statesmen was accurately acquainted with the Yugoslav problem or properly informed about the state of feeling among the Yugoslavs. At the last moment Count Tisza set about acquiring information on the spot, in Croatia and Bosnia, on the state of the Yugoslav question. On all the people with whom he spoke on this occasion

he made the impression of one entirely uninformed on this great question, because his whole attitude to it was wrong.

The same was true of all the other leaders in Budapest. It had been clear since the coronation to every keen observer that the Hungarian statesmen had made up their minds to prevent any solution of the Yugoslav question other than one that served the supposed interests of Hungary—without any regard, of course, to the Monarchy as a whole and the dynasty—by appealing to the obligation of the King to preserve the integrity of the Hungarian lands.

The Emperor could no longer act in accordance with his own wishes. He was fettered by his oath, although even the welfare of Hungary, a thing which the Hungarian politicians, entangled in their atavistic traditions, refused to see, was dependent on a solution of the Yugoslav question within the framework of the Monarchy. For the fettered King there was, it is true, still one little door, one single narrow path to freedom, still open: to destroy the pernicious pretensions of the leading Magyar politicians by taking up an unequivocal attitude to universal, equal, and secret suffrage for Hungary, and simultaneously to proclaim a reform in land tenure, taxation, and administration. That was the way that the Emperor Karl took. It led to the overthrow of Tisza, and, as a further consequence, because of the Emperor's lack of sound advice on Hungarian questions, to an inextricable political tangle, so that ultimately, in view of the stubborn opposition of the Hungarian spokesmen, the goal could only have been reached by a *coup d'état*, which during the War would have presupposed the decision of a reckless gambler, resolved to risk all on the fall of a single card. The Emperor Karl with his high sense of responsibility was not the man for this. And thus things took their fatal course.

### III

From the Yugoslav hearth sprang the spark which set the world conflagration ablaze. For this reason I am going to link up the discussion of the Yugoslav problem with the

question of war guilt. I do this in no spirit of presumption; I merely intend to sketch out the picture which I have formed of this question, which affects the conscience of the whole world. The Archduke Karl spoke of the question of war guilt to me in the autumn of 1914, when I was accompanying him on one of his journeys to Teschen. He said to me on that occasion: "Serbia and Russia lit the torch of war by the organized murder of Uncle Franz and the Russian mobilization, and England transformed it into a world war." In the summer of 1917, when the appeals for mercy for the Sarajevo murderers were submitted to him as Emperor, he repeated his earlier pronouncement. But on this occasion he added that he was referring only to the immediate causes, "for in the matter of the War, we are all guilty. Mistakes were made on all hands." I had to report on the voluminous documents connected with the case. The Emperor made notes and weighed the guilt of all the participants. He went to work with the greatest exactitude and conscientiousness. He studied the petitions and the proved facts about each individual case over and over again. I very soon realized that he had not made up his mind, and was trying to postpone decision by bringing up incidental questions. He interpolated a remark to the effect that all this was not concerned with the real murderers, who were quite safe and secure. When everything had been repeatedly discussed and explained, the Emperor sat lifelessly in his chair; then he reached for two documents, which he handed to me, saying: "Read these. How do you explain this?" They were two telegrams addressed to the Emperor in person from the Pope and the King of Spain, asking him to exercise his prerogative of mercy to the utmost extent. I expressed my profound amazement at their intervention, and remarked that this was certainly a joint action on the part of the Pope and the King, although the two telegrams had been dispatched separately. I added: "Since there has been this intervention on the part of two people who are well-disposed to Your Majesty, I have to assume that they are afraid of unfavourable political reactions if Your Majesty does not exercise your prerogative of pardon to the fullest extent. The remarkable thing about the affair appears to be the fact that the two mediators knew the date on which the

matter would be submitted to Your Majesty for decision." How far this intervention influenced His Majesty's decision, I do not know. Thus much is certain, that the Emperor had formed an independent judgment in the course of two hours' work.

Princip died from an affection of the lungs in prison in Theresienstadt. After the Revolution, national motives caused the Czechoslovaks to have the body of the murderer of that great representative of the Hapsburgs, the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, removed to an honourable grave. The exhumation and removal of the body of a murderer, whose bullets had resulted in such ineffable misery, were made a national festivity. Nevertheless, everything did not go smoothly. The proper spirit refused to appear. Scarcely one of the participants was able to moderate himself to the deep emotional strain of the organizers of the festivity. I have read the report of an officer who was in command at these festivities, and was horrified and repelled both by what he saw and what he heard. It was the report of a man who had preserved a sense of decency in spite of all the national and social extravagances of the upheaval. The programme was somewhat upset. Several witnesses, former friends of Princip, were to identify the remains by means of the alleged extremely characteristic formation of the teeth. But it turned out that all the witnesses unanimously declared that the body shown to them was not that of Princip! Great embarrassment among the organizers of the festivities! But a simple way out of the difficulty was found by declaring the body off-hand to be that of Princip. The witnesses, either from patriotic or other motives, were prepared to sign the identification. But in actual fact the tomb devoted to Princip the murderer does not conceal the bones of that sorry hero, but those of some other rascal. Providence upset their foul calculations.

Until recently little was known about the organization of the Sarajevo murder. The Sarajevo trial threw little light on it. On the Serbian side the murder was represented as the act of some young Bosnian hot-heads, who had no connection with the Serbian Government. Concrete data to contradict this assertion were lacking. It is only quite recently that we have gained light on the obscurity of the murder. The Vienna

publicist, Leopold Mandl, in a series of articles in the *Wiener Achtuhr-Abendblatt*, established, on the evidence of officers of the "Black Hand" and certain Serbian emigrants who were concerned in the murder and for whom he found a refuge in Vienna, that the Russian General Staff not only was aware of the design to murder the Austrian heir-apparent, but had even given encouragement to the execution of the plan. This made certain persons who had been in close touch with the Serbian Government or Pasić feel bound to make corrections and supply other information,<sup>1</sup> and owing to the contradictions in which they became entangled, and admissions the full scope of which they did not realize, the result was that all the threads may now be clearly traced. It is proved to-day that Colonel Dragutin Dimitrijević, head of the information section of the Serbian General Staff, known as "Apis," on account of a white patch in his otherwise black hair, the soul of the secret organization, "Union or Death," founded in 1911, systematically organized the murder of the Archduke in conjunction with Major Tankosić. It was this same Dimitrijević, who, by organizing the assassination of the Serbian King and Queen, prepared the way to the Throne for the Karageorgević dynasty. The confession of Ljuba Jovanović, a former ministerial colleague of Pasić, the Serbian Premier, also proves that he had knowledge of the projected attack on the Austrian heir-apparent as early as the end of May or the beginning of June, 1914, that is to say, before the visit of the German Kaiser to Konopischt (11th and 12th June, 1914). It is also proved that Pasić did not warn the Imperial and Royal Government, as asserted by the Serbian Government. Count Berchtold states this in a communication to Herr Leopold Mandl, expressly intended for publication. The then Serbian Ambassador to the Court of Vienna, Jovan Jovanović confirms the correctness of this

<sup>1</sup> See *The Murder of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand*, by Stanoje Stanojević; statements made by a Serbian Colonel, Bozin Simić, published by Viktor Sergei in the issue of the Paris journal, *Clarté*, for May, 1925; *Krv Slovenstva (Slav Blood)*, with an introduction by Ljuba Jovanović; *The Secrets of the Belgrade Camarilla*, in the journal *La Fédération Balkanique*; *The Assassination of Sarajevo and the War Guilt Question*, by V. Nikolić, in the same journal; *Why We Demand the Revision of the Sarajevo Trial*, by M. Vladimirov, also in the same journal.

statement.<sup>1</sup> Nor was any note on the subject published in the Blue Book which the Serbian Government issued at the beginning of the War. The statement of Professor Stanoje Stanojević that in the Austro-Hungarian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, under reference number "Res.—B.28.VI.1914," annotated as "Serbian communication on the possibility of an attack on the heir-apparent," a document is filed which shows that the Austro-Hungarian Government received timely warning from the Serbian Government,<sup>2</sup> has been proved to be untrue.<sup>3</sup>

Moreover, not only was Pasić privy to the murder organization, but also the Russian military attaché at Belgrade, Artamonov, the Russian Ambassador in Belgrade, Hartwig, and the then Crown Prince and present King Alexander. Through Artamonov, to whom Colonel Dimitrijević had reported on the preparations for the Sarajevo assassination, the organization received the following encouraging answer from the Russian Government: "Go straight ahead." "If you are attacked, you will not stand alone." This was unanimously stated by Bozin Simić, a Serbian colonel now living in exile and an intimate friend of Colonel Dragutin Dimitrijević, and by the late Stojan Protić, one of the leading men in the Radical Party. Stojan Protić repeatedly asserted that a document existed which—after the Salonika trial—made the pardon of the head of the "Black Hand," that is, Dimitrijević, impossible. His exact words were as follows: "As is known, D. Dimitrijević Apis signed a statement in which he confessed to having organized the Sarajevo assassination. But this statement also contained a further point: Apis mentioned in it the names of all those who knew about the attempt, and this ruined him." Nikola Nenadović, the pseudonym of a Bosnian *émigré*, who was present when the decision was

<sup>1</sup> He declared in an article in the *Neues Wiener Tageblatt* for 28th June, 1924, that he issued a warning on his own initiative. But this warning cannot be regarded as a real warning. Jovanović merely spoke quite vaguely of rifles which might be quickly loaded, and similar potential dangers. There is nothing in the article about an official warning from the Serbian Government.

<sup>2</sup> *Politika*, 16th April, 1925.

<sup>3</sup> See the article *On War Guilt*, by Leopold Mandl in *La Fédération Balkanique* for 31st May, 1925.



taken at Toulouse in December, 1913, to murder the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, confirms this in an article written by him and published in *La Fédération Balkanique* under the title, "The Secrets of the Belgrade Camarilla." Pasić had an agent who kept him in touch with everything that happened in the secret organization "Union or Death." This was that Milan Ciganović, with whose help Tankosić supplied arms and bombs to the assassins from the State factory at Kragujevac, and to whose assistance in the delivery and despatch of arms and bombs the three accused, Princip, Grabez, and Cabrinović, unanimously testified at the Sarajevo trial. It was this same Ciganović to whom Princip telegraphed the day before the assassination: "The wedding takes place to-morrow. Send funds;" the same Ciganović, of whom the Belgrade prefect of police, who had caused him to leave the town after the murder, declared that there was no one in Belgrade of the name of Milan Ciganović, although he was in the railway service. It was this same Milan Ciganović, of whom the Serbian Government, in its note of reply to the Imperial and Royal Government, dated 12-25th July, 1914, declared that he could not be discovered, and that, therefore, a warrant against him had been issued. The Serbian Government, for obvious reasons, was very anxious to secure the safety of all incriminating witnesses to their knowledge of the plan of assassination, and more particularly, to Pasić's knowledge of it. Ciganović was concealed in Old Serbia. After the Salonika trial, to which he was summoned by the Government as a witness for the prosecution, he went to America with a false passport supplied by the Serbian Government. He was not permitted to remain there, however, so he returned and was presented by the State with a property in the neighbourhood of Uesküb, on which he recently died. The second and most dangerous witness to the complicity of the Serbian and Russian Governments in the Sarajevo murder, Colonel Dragutin Dimitrijević Apis, and all the chief members of the "Black Hand," the Karageorgivici got rid of by means of the Salonika trial, which was staged on false foundations, and at which the witnesses for the defence were not admitted, and the confidants, or agents, of Pasić acted as wit-

nesses for the Crown. Dimitrijević was condemned to death and shot. A revision of the Salonika trial would, in the opinion of all who are familiar with the circumstances, clear up the whole affair of the murder.

Although to-day there is no longer any doubt that the murder of Sarajevo was organized with the knowledge and consent of circles in close touch with the Serbian Government and persons in Serbian service, a subsidiary question unconnected with the question of war guilt is still undecided, and has not yet been the subject of much discussion—I mean the question why the assassination, about which repeated warning was given, was not prevented by us, although it would easily have been possible to prevent it. The question is still undecided to whose influence is attributable the fact that no attention was paid to the many urgent warnings which were given in good time against the heir-apparent's journey to Bosnia, that the journey was undertaken in spite of these warnings, and that not even the most elementary precautionary measures were taken to protect the Archduke.

In investigating this question, the chief thing that strikes us is that all the influential official positions were occupied by men who were hostile to the Archduke Franz Ferdinand. At the head of the Hungarian Government stood his bitterest enemy, Count Stephan Tisza, at the common Ministry of Finance, was Ritter von Bilinski, and with him as a departmental head, Ludwig von Thallóczy, a declared enemy of Franz Ferdinand; in Sarajevo, at the head of the provincial Government, was Feldzeugmeister Potiorek, and with him, the Hungarian Government Commissioner and Director of Police, Dr. Eduard Gerde, and finally in Agram, the Banus Baron Skerlec, a satellite of Count Stephan Tisza.

The administration of Bosnia and Herzegovina was at that time in the worst hands conceivable. The appointment of Bilinski as common Minister of Finance was not made on objective considerations; it was a way of getting out of a dilemma. Count Berchtold, whose family possessed domiciliary rights both in Austria and in Hungary, had, as a Hungarian, taken over the post of Minister for Foreign Affairs, after the death of Count Ährenthal. This made it necessary

that the position of common Minister of Finance, held by Freiherr von Burian, should be given to an Austrian, so that the equality between Cisleithania and Transleithania, which had become a prescriptive right, should not be disturbed. The Austrian Government turned its attention to Bilinski, who had held the portfolio of finance in Austria under Badeni and Bienerth, and had been a bank governor for many years. The Government was only too glad of the opportunity to get rid in this way of the intriguing chairman of the "Polish Club," who had never caused them anything but embarrassment. Bilinski had always cleverly contrived to gain and keep the favour of the Emperor Franz Joseph's most influential advisers. Thus his appointment met with no difficulties even from the Crown, although the heir-apparent, the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, who had always had the worst possible opinion of Bilinski, and who knew that he did not understand Jugoslav affairs at all, protested strongly against his being entrusted with the direction of the administration of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Serbian Ambassador at the Court of Vienna, Jovanović, who, on account of various past incidents, among others, the well-known Prohaska affair, quite rightly had a very bad name in the Ballplatz and was treated with great aloofness there, made use of Bilinski as a go-between whenever he had anything to say to Count Berchtold, to whom he found it difficult to have access. Jovanović was a frequent visitor at the common Ministry of Finance, which thus became a kind of annexe to the Foreign Office in regard to Serbian affairs.

In addition to Bilinski, however, the Archduke Franz Ferdinand had another very influential enemy installed in the Ministry of Finance. That was the chief of section, Ludwig von Thallóczy,<sup>1</sup> who, as possessing expert knowledge of Bosnia and Herzegovina, had been in charge of the administrative affairs of these countries for many years. Shortly before the Sarajevo tragedy, Thallóczy had come into conflict with Franz Ferdinand on a matter of principle, and knew that

<sup>1</sup> Thallóczy lost his life in the frightful railway disaster at Herczeghalom on the night of 1st December, 1916, in which about seventy people were killed. Thallóczy's body was rescued from the ruins of the saloon car, in which he was travelling.

his removal from his post and even his retirement had been decided on and was immediately imminent. The Provincial Governor, Feldzeugmeister Potiorek, was unacquainted with provincial conditions. He lived like a snail in its shell. He never came into contact with the outside world, and he learned only what the Government Commissioner and Police Director, Dr. Eduard Gerde, reported to him.

Repeated warnings were given against the Archduke's journey to Bosnia. The warnings came from many quarters, and were directed to the most varied addresses. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs, too, preserves in its archives a series of warnings, one of which was published by Colonel Emil Seeliger in the *Neues Wiener Tagblatt* in 1924. It ran as follows:

"I learn as follows from an entirely trustworthy source: 'Herr Ilia Pavlović, the director of the Ueskub branch of the Zemalska Banka, has announced in Serbian circles that in two or three days a large number of Serbian comitatjis are to invade Bosnia with bombs, rifles and munitions. The organization of the comitatjis will take place these days. The above-named director has also stated that an attack on the Archducal heir-apparent and Count Berchtold is being planned by Serbia.'"

But Bilinski and Potiorek, both lacking adequate knowledge of Yugoslav conditions, the former informed and advised by Thallóczy, the latter by the Hungarian Government Commissioner, Dr. Gerde, paid no attention to these warnings, and in the end declared that there was not the slightest reason for anxiety. Although it has been proved that Jovanović, the Serbian Ambassador, did not give express warning, nevertheless, his hints about "rifles which might be quickly loaded," should have made Bilinski exercise the utmost caution. But he paid as little attention to the statements of the Serbian ambassador as to all the other indications of impending catastrophe. Bilinski himself says in the chapter of his memoirs that deals with the murder of the heir-apparent: "The rumour that I warned the Emperor Franz Joseph against the visit is not correct." The Banus Baron Skerlec, and, through him, the Hungarian Government,

received through the municipal secret police at Agram very definite information about the projected attack on the Archduke. Even Princip's name was mentioned in these reports.<sup>1</sup>

The first attempt at murder by bomb took place on the Appelkai at 10.25 a.m. on the morning of the fateful day (28th June, 1914).<sup>2</sup> The bomb fell on the edge of the roof of the motor-car, which had been opened, slid off and exploded in front of the carriage behind, containing the suite. Lieutenant Colonel von Merizzi was somewhat seriously wounded, and was taken off to hospital at once. The Duchess of Hohenberg was grazed in the neck by the flying cap of the bomb. Cabrinović, the man who threw the bomb, was pursued and captured on the opposite bank of the Miljacka. The Archduke and his consort continued the drive to the Rathaus, which was only about a hundred paces distant. On his arrival there, the Archduke discussed the happily frustrated attack with the gentlemen of his suite, and gave unconcealed expression to his indignation. Then he turned very ungraciously to Potiorek and said: "Well, what is to happen now? Are we to go on with the drive? Will there be more bombs?" Potiorek replied: "Your Imperial Highness, I am convinced that nothing more will happen. There are only two things to be done, either to drive direct to the Konak or to take a roundabout way to the Museum and avoid the town, so as to punish the population. But the Government Commissioner

<sup>1</sup> In the year 1915 I had the opportunity of speaking to officers in the convalescent home established in the Houses of Parliament who had been in Sarajevo at the time of the crime. When, in discussing the assassination, I spoke of a secret conspiracy, they laughed and said that the affair was by no means secret. There had been quite open talk of a conspiracy. The young men whom the population knew to be the conspirators were distinguishable by white badges. But no one troubled their heads about it. The officers stated that it was out of the question for the police officials to have been ignorant of the intended crime. Although I cannot absolutely believe these details, it is, however, certain that the political atmosphere was very overheated, and that the absence of all precautionary measures whatever must be regarded as quite incomprehensible. This extraordinary degree of levity suggests deliberation. None of the explanations afterwards put forward can excuse this levity.

<sup>2</sup> The following account of the course of events is taken from the statements, which agree with each other, of Feldzeugmeister Potiorek (confidential report to the Emperor Franz Joseph) and Count Franz Harrach (information supplied to the author).

is here," and Potiorek, turning to him, put the question: "Can the drive be continued without danger?" Dr. Gerde answered in the affirmative. The Archduke Franz Ferdinand said to Potiorek: "All right. But I must first visit Lieutenant Colonel von Merizzi in the garrison hospital. We will drive to the Museum from there." The chief chamberlain, Count Rumerskirch, then put to Potiorek the shrewd question where the garrison hospital was situated, and whether it could be reached without driving through the town. It was decided to drive, not through the town, that is, not along Franz Joseph Street, where the crowd was awaiting the passing of the Archduke, but along the Appelkai, which was now quite deserted. In front of the Rathaus, before they entered the cars, this decision was repeated to the chauffeurs several times, with the express order "not along Franz Joseph Street, but along the deserted Appelkai." The Duchess of Hohenberg was to proceed direct to the Konak according to programme. But she turned to her husband and said "I would rather drive with you." "Very well, as you like," was the Archduke's friendly reply. Potiorek also asked to be allowed to drive with them. He sat opposite the Archduke and the Duchess of Hohenberg. In spite of the opposition of the heir-apparent, Count Franz Harrach took up a position on the footboard of the car with the intention of protecting the Archduke with his body. The Burgomaster of Sarajevo and the Chief of Police, Dr. Gerde, occupied the first car. The Archduke's chauffeur had instructions to follow the car in front. But when it came to the place where the roads forked, the leading car did not, as it had been expressly ordered to do, drive straight on along the Appelkai, but turned aside, against express orders, into the crowded Franz Joseph Street. The Archduke's car followed. Count Harrach at once called attention to this. Potiorek rose and shouted excitedly to the chauffeur: "What are you doing? We are taking the wrong road. We were to go by the Appelkai." The chauffeur turned round to General Potiorek and came to a halt. Hardly had the car stopped when an arm holding a Browning pistol thrust out of the crowd lining the street close to the car. Shots rang out. At the first shot, the Duchess's head fell forward, and she slid to the ground by her husband's side; at the second

shot, the Archduke put his hand to his neck and said: "Sopherl, I beg you to live for our children's sake." He groped about with his hands like a man in the dark. In reply to Count Harrach's question, "Is Your Imperial Highness hurt?" the Archduke said: "Oh! no." These were the last words he ever spoke. He tried to say something more, but blood began pouring from his mouth and he lost consciousness. The cars drove rapidly to the Konak. The doctors who were hurriedly summoned found pulse and heart beating scarcely perceptibly, the breathing was superficial and the pupils reacted only slightly. The bullet had penetrated the neck behind the larynx, severed the artery and lodged at the top of the spine. At 11 a.m., ten minutes after reaching the Konak, the Archduke died without having recovered consciousness. The Duchess of Hohenberg had already expired before they arrived at the Konak.

The Mohammedan burgomaster and the Hungarian chief of police had driven the heir-apparent and his wife, contrary to instructions repeated several times, into the mob of people in Franz Joseph Street, and thus right into the murderer's path.

#### IV

In view of the fact, which may be regarded to-day as fully proved, that the organization of the murder of the Austro-Hungarian heir-apparent was accomplished with the knowledge and approval of persons in close touch with the Serbian Government, and that Russia, by the general mobilization order, made any action to preserve peace impossible, the answer to the question of war guilt follows automatically, so far as Austria-Hungary is concerned. Our sending a Note to Serbia which allowed a very brief time for reply can, therefore, no longer come into question nor be ascribed to Austria's discredit in judging the question of war guilt; this would be tantamount to reproving a man who had been robbed for provoking a quarrel with the thief, because he demanded compensation from the thief, no matter how harsh the terms

in which the demand was couched. The question whether our drastic action in sending a short-term Note to Serbia was not the first step towards self-destruction, and whether, in view of the general situation and the supreme danger of a World War, every effort should have been made to avoid war with Serbia, would certainly be answered in the affirmative to-day by most people, with their knowledge of the disastrous issue of the World War; but in the summer of 1914, with the mood then prevailing, it was almost universally answered in the negative. I myself was also under the spell of that mood, and welcomed our drastic procedure towards Serbia with satisfaction.

No one had dreamt of a revision of our policy in the Balkans; this would have presupposed a complete alteration of our course in domestic policy as well. That, by our customs policy, we had brought upon ourselves the hatred of Serbia and Rumania as well, which, with the single exception of King Carol, was on the side of Serbia, that the Southern Slavs aimed only at uniting and reaching the sea, and that, by our unfortunate Albanian policy, we had closed the last valve and that an explosion was inevitable, none of this was ever realized by the men in power. The political course then being followed was diametrically opposed to any veering in the direction of meeting the wishes of the Southern Slavs.

This mistaken orientation, this wrong treatment of the national problems of the south-east corner of Europe, constituted one of the causes of the disaster of the World War, so far as Austria-Hungary came into question. And with regard to Germany, the German socialist, Paul Lensch, has laid bare with unerring accuracy the roots from which sprang the conflict between England and Germany. In his book, *Drei Jahre Weltrevolution*, the following passage occurs: "This action of Bismarck's (the introduction of the protective tariff) was one of the deepest causes which led to the present world-revolution. By it he set the German engine on a track on which it inevitably had one day to come into collision with the English engine. For this customs system, although not the only one, was one of the most important causes of that new organization of capitalism, as the champion and representative of which the new German Empire developed, and which we learned to know as the secret of German



superiority in the markets of the world and of the conflict between Germany and England."

It would be folly to believe that, given the existing state of things and political principles which had become as rigid as steel, the great settlement could have been permanently prevented. The encirclement of the Central Powers went steadily on. The meshes of the net became ever closer and stronger. The aim of the States that were our enemies was the destruction of Germany and her allies. And the longer the settlement had been postponed, the greater would have been the dangers, the more overwhelming the catastrophe. The Emperor Wilhelm was quite right when he said to the Austrian Ambassador, Count Szögyény, on 5th July, 1914, that Russia was arming, but was not yet armed, for the great Russian armament programme was not yet completed. But it had been decided upon since 1913, at an expenditure of about five milliards of roubles. The necessary credits had been already promised by England and France.<sup>1</sup> It is beyond conception how utterly disastrous the World War would have been from the beginning for the Central Powers, after this gigantic armament scheme had been carried through. It is true that there were many ways open to Austria for escaping from the clutches of the enemy. But these ways were not taken. And thus, as things stood in the summer of 1914, there was nothing left for us but to listen to the voice of our powerful ally. The purport of the reports that Count Berchtold received from Berlin was that both the Emperor Wilhelm

<sup>1</sup> In the year 1913 a strictly secret session of the Duma took place, at which the great armament programme was discussed. There were present at this session all the Ministers, the Army and Navy General Staffs, and the members of the Military and Naval Committees of the Duma. It was a truly gigantic programme which was unfolded. The estimated costs ran to about five milliards of roubles. When one of those present expressed the view that this immense sum could be much more advantageously spent on the construction of Russian railways, schools or other objects of public utility, the Minister for War, Sukhomlinov, explained that the credits had been placed at Russia's disposal by England and France, exclusively for this purpose. This information I received from the chief quaestor of the Duma, Baron von Fersen, who was the only official present at this secret session. He told me that, as he was leaving the session in company of a member of the Duma, the latter declared to him that, if this programme were carried out, Germany would be compelled to declare war on Russia, since this programme was clearly designed for a war of aggression and annihilation.

and all authoritative circles were firmly behind the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, but that they found it incomprehensible why we did not take energetic measures against Serbia and clear out once and for all that nest of revolutionary conspirators.<sup>1</sup> "Serbia is a band of robbers, which must be

<sup>1</sup> On the 8th July, 1914, Count Szögyény, our Ambassador at Berlin, had a conversation with the Emperor Wilhelm. On announcing that he had an autograph letter from His Imperial and Royal Majesty to deliver, he received an invitation from the German Emperor and Empress to luncheon at the New Palace. In his letter the Emperor Franz Joseph expressed his belief in the necessity of eliminating Serbia, the pivot of the Pan-Slav policy, as a political factor of power in the Balkans. The German Emperor assured Szögyény that he had expected action against Serbia on Austria's part; but since the matter might involve a very serious European complication, he would not give a definite reply until he had conferred with the Imperial Chancellor. After luncheon, the Emperor authorized Count Szögyény to tell His Majesty that he could count on Germany's wholehearted support even in the event of a European complication. The Emperor expressly added that Russia was not yet ready for war. He said that he could understand that it would be a grievous matter to His Majesty the Emperor Franz Joseph, with his well-known love of peace, to march on Serbia; but if Austria-Hungary had really realized the necessity of military action against Serbia, he would be sorry if the Monarchy let the present favourable moment slip by (Report of Count Szögyény to Count Berchtold, dated 5th July, 1914). On 6th July, Bethmann Hollweg communicated to the Austrian Ambassador the views of the German Government. They agreed in the main with those expressed by word of mouth by the Emperor Wilhelm the previous day. With regard to Serbia, His Majesty could naturally not adopt any attitude to the questions pending between Austria-Hungary and that country, since these were not within his competence. The Emperor Franz Joseph could, however, count on His Majesty's being on the side of Austria-Hungary in conformity with the obligations arising out of the alliance and in loyalty to his old friendship (Bethmann Hollweg to the German Ambassador in Vienna, 6th July, 1914). That same day Count Szögyény reported that he had ascertained at his interview with the Federal Chancellor that both he and his Imperial master "regarded immediate measures on our part against Serbia as the most radical and best solution of our difficulties in the Balkans."

The following is an extract from the report of Count Szögyény to Count Berchtold, dated 12th July, 1914: "As Your Excellency will have perceived from my telegraphic reports of the last few days, and from the personal impressions the Count gained here, both His Majesty the Emperor Wilhelm and all the authoritative factors in Berlin not only stand firmly and loyally behind the Monarchy, but are also encouraging us most vigorously not to let the present moment slip, but to proceed energetically against Serbia and clear out once and for all that nest of revolutionary conspirators; they leave it entirely to us to choose the means we consider suitable."

arrested for its crimes; the rascals have carried on their agitation with murder and must be made to eat humble pie," wrote the Emperor Wilhelm on the margin of a diplomatic report on 23rd July, 1914. He agreed with the view that impossible demands must be presented to Serbia; he wrote on the margin of a report of Tschirschky's dated 10th July: "Evacuate the Sandjak! Then the fat would be in the fire! Austria absolutely must get it back again at once, in order to prevent union between Serbia and Montenegro and the Serbs from reaching the sea!" To the observation that Tisza held it necessary to act "gentleman-like," the Emperor writes: "Towards murderers, after what has happened! Rubbish!"

At the Council of Ministers on 7th July, 1914, Count Berchtold, in agreement with the Berlin Cabinet, advocated that Serbia should be made permanently harmless by a demonstration of force. He had the support of all present at the Council with the exception of Count Tisza, who declared that he could not consent to a surprise attack on Serbia without preliminary diplomatic action. Hard but not impossible demands to Serbia must first be formulated, and an ultimatum issued only if Serbia refused to satisfy these demands. But even Tisza soon revised his opinion. As early as 14th July, 1914, he said to Tschirschky, the German Ambassador: "I found it very difficult to make up my mind to advise war, but I am now convinced of its necessity, and I will now support the greatness of the Monarchy with all my power." At the conclusion of their interview, Count Tisza shook the Ambassador warmly by the hand, saying: "United we shall now look the future calmly and firmly in the face." The German Emperor wrote on the margin of Tschirschky's report of this interview: "Well, there's a man for you!"

Count Tisza, as is quite clear from the minutes of the Council of Ministers, at the beginning took a point of view opposed to war only because he feared that action against Serbia might lead to territorial aggrandizement of the Monarchy, which would have run counter to the demands of the Hungarian nationality policy. It was he who demanded a unanimous resolution of the Council of Ministers to the effect that the Monarchy assured foreign powers that it did not

intend to wage a war of conquest nor to annex Serbia. With regard to the tenor of the Note to be addressed to Serbia, complete agreement was reached. Count Tisza even introduced severer wording on many points.<sup>1</sup> It was a Hungarian Government officer, Count Forgach, who was responsible for the most severe conditions.<sup>2</sup> Thus Count Tisza's much extolled rôle of working for the maintenance of peace was in reality played for a very brief space.

Such was the political temper of those in authority in Austria and Hungary and also in the German Empire. One can neither wonder at this temper nor blame it. It was almost forced upon them. Since the sacrifice of our prestige with regard to Serbia would have reduced the value of, and been prejudicial to, the Triple Alliance, we more or less owed it to Germany to take energetic measures against Serbia. To one point only should we have devoted the greatest attention, a careful avoidance of even the slightest appearance of war guilt. And in this both the Austrian and the German diplomats were guilty of serious blunders. The negotiations which preceded the outbreak of War were carried on so unskilfully that, although the war guilt was entirely on the side of the enemy, we entered the War encumbered to all appearances with the full weight of it. The appearance of guilt for the War which clung to us did us very great harm: during the War it was an effective means of propaganda in the hands of our enemies, and after the Revolution it served a similar purpose for our home population against the Monarchy and against all those who were in power at the time. One of our chief mistakes in this respect was the intransigent form of our Note to Serbia and our non-acceptance of the Serbian reply. To begin with our Note. The putting forward of conditions which Serbia could not accept without surrender of her sovereign rights was bound to put us in the wrong in the eyes of the world, all the more so as her complicity in the organization of the Sarajevo murder was not then in any way proved. The purport of the report of Sektionsrat von Wiesner, who

<sup>1</sup> Report of the German Ambassador at Vienna to the Federal Chancellor, dated 14th July, 1914.

<sup>2</sup> Pencil notes in Count Forgach's writing on the first draft of the Note to Serbia, containing a number of further demands.

had been commissioned to investigate the murder, was, as is well known, that the complicity of the Serbian Government in the organization of the crime or preparations for it and provision of the weapons was not proved and was only conjectural. The Serbian Note in reply to ours cannot be better characterized than in Ambassador Freiherr von Musulin's description, contained in his book, *Das Haus am Ballplatz*. "The Belgrade reply," writes Musulin, "was only accommodating in appearance: this appearance, however, was so magnificently camouflaged that not only the opponents of our cause but even its sincere friends were and still are under the impression that practical success for us could be deduced from the Serbian Note. I can speak with complete impartiality on the subject, because, as I remarked earlier, I was of opinion that we ought to have accepted it, not because it was satisfactory, but in spite of the fact that it was not satisfactory." Freiherr von Musulin quite rightly was afraid that, if it came to extremes, "the full chorus of our enemies would accuse Austria-Hungary of trying to crush submissive little Serbia." He calls the Serbian reply of 25th July, 1914, the most brilliant example of diplomatic skill that he had ever known, and demonstrates point by point in his later arguments that Serbia replied to the so-called ultimatum in a way which, while it rendered our demands illusory in the most important respects, at the same time gave the impression of having given way on all points. Even although the Serbian reply was unsatisfactory, nevertheless, by its apparent submission, it might have been accepted without any loss of Austrian prestige, and actually should have been accepted. Freiherr von Giesl, by his immediate departure from Belgrade, assumed a responsibility the scope of which he was obviously incapable of estimating.<sup>1</sup> The German Emperor was quite

<sup>1</sup> Freiherr von Giesl had orders to leave Belgrade if our conditions were rejected, or accepted only conditionally. But an unforeseen case arose. The Note appeared to promise complete submission without really doing so. Giesl must have realized that the Note could not be treated either on Model A or Model B. According to a telephonic communication from Freiherr von Giesl from Semlin on 25th July, 1914, 7.45 p.m., the reply was received at 5.50 p.m. Giesl and the Embassy staff left Belgrade by the express at 6.30 p.m. A cursory reading of the very comprehensive reply would require fifteen minutes. I doubt whether Freiherr von Giesl,

right when he made the marginal note on the copy of the Serbian reply: "A brilliant achievement to be accomplished in only forty-eight hours. This is more than one could have expected! A great moral success for Vienna; but it does away with all reason for war, and Giesl should have remained quietly in Belgrade! I should never have ordered mobilization on the strength of this!" And he wrote to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs that same day: "After reading the Serbian Note, which I received this morning, I am convinced that on the whole the wishes of the Danube Monarchy have been satisfied. The few reservations which Serbia makes on individual points can, in my opinion, easily be cleared up in negotiations. But a capitulation of the most humble kind is herein proclaimed *orbi et urbi*, and it does away with all reason for war."

The Emperor Franz Joseph long resisted military action. He was acquainted with war, he had memories of 1859 and 1866, and he said to those who advised war that they did not know what war was. When Italian intervention was imminent, and it was not clear from where the troops necessary to oppose Italy should be taken, the Archduke Karl said to me: "Everything is coming about as His Majesty prophesied. He knew quite well why he resisted war. He always said that the War would assume unprecedented dimensions, and that we should not be able to stand the pace. But everyone advised His Majesty to take drastic steps against Serbia; the war against Serbia was always represented as an armed stroll. His Majesty signed the declaration of war because the Serbians were alleged to have fired on our troops. But there was no truth in that." The daily diplomatic reports contained only what it was wished that the Emperor should know. He was dependent on the accounts of the political situation which were supplied to him. The influence of his immediate advisers decided the picture he formed of the world situation.

in the remaining seventeen minutes, was in a position to comprehend this extraordinarily skilfully drafted note with all its concealed reservations, to estimate the reactions on public opinion and on the question of war guilt of the rejection of an apparently wholly submissive reply, and the whole weight of the enormous responsibility of over-hasty steps, and finally also—all in seventeen minutes—arrange for his own departure and that of the whole Embassy staff.

It has become usual to make Count Berchtold, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, responsible for the outbreak of war. Nothing could be more unjust. All those in power were for war at that time. The Emperor never heard any other view from his immediate entourage. Prince Montenuovo, whom the Emperor saw every day, and whose advice and opinion he valued greatly, was unshakably in favour of war. He had free entry to the Ballplatz, and was in permanent touch with Count Tisza through Count Forgach. And Tisza had long abandoned his opposition to war and had joined the agitators. That Tisza's counsel had the greatest weight with the Emperor Franz Joseph is easily understandable, for he knew that Tisza had been the only one to warn him against war.

And public opinion was ranged alongside those in authority. Even the social democrat, Viktor Adler, when Count Berchtold asked him for his views, advocated war. Even he regarded it as unavoidable. Count Berchtold was undoubtedly right when he said to the Russian Ambassador on 29th July, 1914, that the temper of the population of Vienna and the Monarchy had in the last few days become such that any further negotiations with Serbia would be a complete impossibility for any Austro-Hungarian Government: "it would simply be swept out of the way." That was quite accurate. But what had fostered this temper? The crime of Sarajevo had roused the greatest indignation in the populace. This indignation became passionate hatred against Serbia when the public learned that the criminal organization had its root in Belgrade, a fact by no means proved at that time. And Giesl's departure cut the ground from beneath our feet, for it was bound to stir up a conviction in the public that Serbia had returned an answer of complete rejection. But if the Serbian Note had been accepted the populace would have interpreted this as a sign of Serbia's submission and regarded the prestige of the Monarchy as fully maintained. There is no doubt that Freiherr von Giesl by his over-hasty departure applied the spark to the powder barrel.

Austrian diplomatists, however, also did their part in making the semblance of war guilt fall on us even in the eyes of our ally. Thus Prince Lichnowsky, among others, in a

telegram to the German Foreign Office, dated 28th July, complained that Count Mensdorff had never made any secret of the fact that Austria intended to overthrow Serbia, and that the Austrian Note had been deliberately framed in such a manner that it was bound to be rejected. When the report was circulated by the *Central News* in London on Saturday evening that Serbia had yielded, the gentlemen of the Austro-Hungarian Embassy, says Lichnowsky, were greatly dashed. Count Mensdorff said to Prince Lichnowsky in confidence on 27th July, 1914, that Vienna was unconditionally for War because Serbia must be "humbled." These same gentlemen also stated that it was intended to present parts of Serbia to Bulgaria (and presumably Albania also). . . . Lichnowsky was not aware, he said, whether the gentlemen had expressed similar views in conversations with other people, but considered that it was not unjustifiable to assume that "it was not a mere case for harmless pedagogic admonitions such as the defective vigilance of that Polish babbler, Bilinski, gave occasion for." The Foreign Office in Berlin made some further unflattering observations on this report, and passed it on to Tschirschky.

All the diplomatic negotiations abound in examples showing that our diplomatists did not realize their chief task, which was to avoid at all costs any semblance of war guilt and thus to create favourable preliminary conditions for all the complications that might arise. An opportunity for this was offered as late as the 30th July, when Sir E. Grey put forward a formula for mediation to the effect that Austria should, after occupying Belgrade or other places, cease her advance and announce her conditions. Bethmann Hollweg forwarded this proposal to Tschirschky at noon with the following notes: "If Austria rejects all mediation, we are faced with a conflagration in which England will be against us, and Italy and Rumania, to judge from all the signs, no longer with us, and we should be two against four great Powers. With England as our enemy, the brunt of the fight will fall on Germany. Austria's political prestige, the military honour of her army and her just claims on Serbia, could be preserved by the occupation of Belgrade or other places. By the humiliation of Serbia, she would re-strengthen her position in the Balkans



and with regard to Russia. In these circumstances we must urgently and vigorously suggest the acceptance of mediation on these honourable conditions for the consideration of the Viennese Cabinet. The responsibility for the consequences that would otherwise ensue would be an extremely heavy one both for Austria and for us." The Emperor Wilhelm also appealed personally to the Emperor Franz Joseph. But the reply from Vienna was long in coming. Berchtold first declared he must ask the Emperor, and finally Count Tisza had also to be asked. Next day the mediation proposal was rejected, although Berchtold was already aware of the Russian mobilization, so that it would have been a case merely of an apparent acceptance of the proposal. Thus the picture of the world situation in the last few days before the outbreak of War was changed with kaleidoscopic rapidity, from moment to moment, by the ceaseless arrival, despatch and crossing of telegrams, diplomatic reports, warnings, and exhortations. All diplomatic action finally proved ineffective in face of the legitimate suspicion universally felt and the anxiety lest, by credulous acceptance of attempts at deviation, military measures should be driven into the background.

On the morning of 29th July, the Tsar signed the ukase for general mobilization against Austria-Hungary and Germany. At 9.30 p.m. on the same day he countermanded the order and, instead of general mobilization, ordered partial mobilization against Austria. This was the result of a telegram from the German Emperor. Count Szapáry's statement, which had arrived in the interval, that Austria did not intend to annex Serbian territory, and was not thinking of violating the sovereign rights of Serbia, which satisfied all Russia's alleged demands, was intercepted by Sasonov. As a result the Tsar, on the following day (30th July) at 1 p.m., once again ordered the general mobilization of the whole army and the fleet.<sup>1</sup> By 6 o'clock that evening, the telegram was rushing

<sup>1</sup> The legend that an extra edition of the *Berliner Lokalanzeiger* containing a false report of German mobilization led the Russian Government to general mobilization, has long been proved to be erroneous by exhaustive investigation. It has been proved that the telegram from Sverbeev, the Russian Ambassador at Berlin, containing the false report of the German

along all the wires in the great Empire of the Tsars. Thus the die was cast. Russia had willed the War, and, in order to begin it, had ranged herself on the side of the murderers of a prince.

mobilization was not received until 11.20 p.m., that is, six hours after the issue of the telegraphic mobilization order in Petersburg. See *Leitfaden zur Kriegsschuldfrage*, by Count Max Montgelas.

## CHAPTER VII

### MY SUMMONS TO THE COURT OF THE EMPEROR KARL

"The position of confidential secretary to a monarch always wins hatred for the man who holds it."—COUNT PODEWILS to King Friedrich II of Prussia.

#### I

IT was the evening of 31st January, 1917. I was working in my office in the Parliament Buildings. My desk telephone rang, a noticeably prolonged ringing. I put the ear-piece to my ear. At first there was absolute silence, then the sound of a switch-through, and a clear voice said: "Baden, Kaiserhaus." Then again the sound of a switch-through, a few seconds' pause, and I heard the Emperor's familiar voice: "Hullo! The Emperor Karl speaking. Is that Polzer?"

"Yes, Your Majesty. Your obedient servant at the telephone."

"How are you? I haven't seen you for ages."

"I thank Your Majesty, I am very well."

"I only wanted to ask you to come to see me at Baden to-morrow. I have something important to discuss with you."

"What time would Your Majesty like me to be at Baden?"

After a brief pause: "I can't say yet. The Private Office will inform you of the time. I only wanted to know whether you were in Vienna, and to tell you personally that you must come to-morrow. Au revoir, now, and good night."

The conversation was over. I replaced the ear-piece slowly. I knew what the order to come to Baden meant. I was at the beginning of a completely new phase in my career, a heavy and responsible task.

Soon afterwards, an official of the Private Office rang up and told me that His Majesty wished me to appear in audience next day at 11.15 a.m. This was later confirmed by telegram.

Next day I took the electric train to Baden. The Austrian Imperial House is connected with this pleasant watering-

place by old traditions, which go back to the time of the Emperor Friedrich III, who very often stayed in his "dear Baden," and the castle of the same name. The relations became closer when Field Marshal Archduke Carl in 1820 built the beautiful Weilburg in the Helenental for his wife, the Archduchess Henriette, when the Archduke Anton, the "Father of the Poor," moved into his new palace in the Antonsgasse in 1818, and, most of all, they were strengthened by the Emperor Franz who resided for a considerable part of almost every year between 1793 and 1834 in Baden. In the year 1813 he acquired the house belonging to Baron Arnstein on the Hauptplatz (now the Kaiser Karl-Platz), which was henceforth known as the "Kaiserhaus." He extended the property by the purchase of the adjoining buildings of the Augustinian monastery, to which the former Church of our Lady belonged.<sup>1</sup> Baden may even in a sense be called the cradle of the Austrian Empire, for it was within the walls of this town that the negotiations took place which resulted in the Emperor Franz's being declared first hereditary Emperor of Austria on 14th August, 1804.

The Emperor Karl had removed Army Headquarters from Teschen to Baden, in order to be able to combine the Chief Command, which he had taken over, with the carrying on of the business of Government.

The "Kaiserhaus" at Baden is a two-storey building, which, with its modest façade, its balcony resting on two pillars, its bright yellow paint and green window frames, bears the obvious stamp of the Franciscan Biedermeier period. It is by no means roomy; on the ground floor there are only a few large rooms, the middle one of which, a pleasant room with three windows, was used as the Emperor's study. It had a dining-room on one side and a bedroom on the other. The other rooms on the ground floor, which faced the courtyard, were used as the aides-de-camp's room, a waiting-room and as offices. Two rooms on the floor above were assigned to Adjutant-General Prince Zdenko Lobkowitz.

On my arrival in Baden, I proceeded to the "Kaiserhaus." Sentries were posted at the gate. A non-commissioned officer

<sup>1</sup> *Kaiser und Könige in Baden*, by Gustav Calliano.

of the Guards conducted me up the steps to the aides-de-camp's room on the ground floor. There I met my esteemed old friend, Count Georg Wallis, who had also been summoned to an audience. He told me how glad he was to see me here. He himself had only a very brief report to make to His Majesty, so that I should not be kept waiting long on his account. A few minutes later Count Czernin came out of the Emperor's study, and Count Wallis was admitted. The aide-de-camp made an entry in the audience book, and told me that my turn came next. Soon afterwards, Adjutant-General Freiherr von Marterer, the head of the Military Chancery, came into the room. I introduced myself to him. We had hardly exchanged a few words when Count Wallis came out of the Emperor's study. The aide-de-camp then announced me, and I went in. The Emperor was standing in the middle of the room in the field-grey uniform of a marshal. I bowed. Then the Emperor held out his hand in friendly fashion, saying, "Ah, it's you, my dear Polzer. How are you? It is long since I've seen you. Much has happened in the interval. Do sit down." With these words he sat down at his writing-table, and pointed to a chair by the side of it. "You know, of course, why I have sent for you. You will remember the conversation we had about a year ago at Reichenau? I told you then that I had you in mind for the post of director of my Private Office. I am going to appoint you temporarily. I am not going to ask you on this occasion whether you will accept the position, as I am sure you will because I ask you to." I replied: "I thank Your Majesty for your confidence, which I shall try to deserve, so far as lies in my poor power. I know what a responsible office I shall be assuming. I recognize no higher interest than that of Your Majesty. I shall have to take the oath to maintain it. Your Majesty may rely on my keeping it."

"I am convinced of that. I know you so well, and it is because I know you that I wish to have you near me. It is true that in Baron Schiessl I took over from His late Majesty a reliable, experienced and clever head of the Private Office. But it distresses me every time I have to send for the old gentleman, who must certainly find the journey to Baden rather a burden. You must arrange things so that I can have

you always at hand. The head of the Private Office belongs to the Emperor. In a few days, after your appointment is through, I shall send for you again, and we can discuss the matter further."

The Emperor instructed me to see Baron Schiessl, whom he had already informed of my coming appointment, in order to take over office. I must also visit the two chiefs of section in the Private Office, Dr. Mikeš and Baron Weber. He would leave it to my tactfulness to find the right method of preventing these zealous officials, who had done loyal and excellent service to His late Majesty, from resenting the preferment of a man junior to them both in years and rank. The Emperor discussed this at length. He was obviously greatly concerned that it should not cause ill-feeling. Finally he said: "These gentlemen will undoubtedly understand if you tell them for how many years I have known you and how much easier it will be for me to work with you than with anyone else." He then authorized me to inform the President of the House of Lords, Prince Windischgratz, as my immediate superior, of my pending appointment.

Next day I went to see Baron Schiessl. The change of office was quickly accomplished. As there were no arrears of work in the Private Office, it was only a matter of instructing me in the organization of the work. Baron Schiessl gave me the necessary explanations clearly and precisely, so that I was able to grasp the chief points immediately. When he handed over the safe in which the cipher code, the "family statute" and some other documents were contained, he also opened the base chest and took out a locked leather pocket-book, which he told me he had received from his predecessor, Baron Braun, to whom Szögyény<sup>1</sup> had given it a few days after the death of the Crown Prince with the remark that it contained the last effects of the Crown Prince discovered in the death-chamber at Meyerling. The pocket-book had been kept locked up in the Private Office ever since.

On 4th February I was again summoned to Baden. I reported to His Majesty that the transfer of office had taken

<sup>1</sup> The then chief of section in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and later Ambassador to Berlin, who was one of the Crown Prince Rudolf's most intimate confidants.

place, and he told me that he had appointed me chief of section, Class III, and Director of the Private Office.

The Emperor then discussed the distribution of the work and the question of the appointment of a Hungarian chief of section, a post which had become vacant through the retirement of Daruváry. He expressed the opinion that Daruváry had begged to be removed from office for no reason, and added: "If anyone shows me so markedly that he does not wish to serve me, I see no reason for forcing him to do so." There appear, however, to have been various petty reasons which influenced Daruváry's decision to resign. I heard of some order which was either not high enough or else was conferred too late, but I did not place much confidence in the truth of the rumour. Count Klebelsberg was mentioned at that time in certain Hungarian newspapers as a candidate for the post of head of the Private Office. This fact might have annoyed Daruváry. The Emperor's ready acceptance of Daruváry's resignation was very natural, but it did him no good, for he thereby aroused the resentment of a man who was related by blood or marriage to, and on friendly terms with, the great majority of the Hungarian gentry, and could only too easily make the Emperor unpopular in Hungary. Moreover, according to the unanimous verdict of all who knew him, Daruváry was in ability head and shoulders above all his Hungarian colleagues in the Private Office, so that his departure was a twofold disadvantage.

The Emperor was not sure whether Baron Nagy, the Aulic Councillor of the Private Office, possessed the necessary qualifications for the post of Hungarian chief of section. Count Tisza, who regarded Nagy as a "bécsi Magyar" (a Viennese Magyar), was opposed to his appointment, not considering him equal to the task. Moreover, went on the Emperor, Baron Nagy was not familiar with Hungarian conditions. It was a very thorny question, out of which, unless it were very carefully handled, Hungary might make a "grievance." He asked me for my views. I replied at once: "Count Tisza's opposition to the appointment of Baron Nagy is, in my humble opinion, a matter of no moment, since it is not a question of a confidential position with Count Tisza, but with Your Majesty, and, therefore, the only thing that matters

is whether Baron Nagy is equal to the post and whether Your Majesty would have the necessary confidence in him." Finally I asked permission to consider the matter. "I may say to you in confidence," resumed the Emperor, "that Tisza's days as Hungarian Prime Minister are numbered. I am unable to agree with his policy on several heads."<sup>1</sup> I replied that, from my knowledge of the political situation in Hungary, and especially, of Tisza's political aims, I could only regard his resignation as a happy event. Since the over-hasty coronation, I had looked upon him as the grave-digger of the Monarchy. After this revelation on the part of the Emperor, I felt myself relieved of the task of saying any more. The Emperor broke up the audience by remarking that he had still several reports to hear, and invited me to lunch, after which he would continue the discussion.

I dealt with some business of the Private Office, which at that time had a branch at Baden, and then went to the dining-room. Freiherr von Marterer and the aides-de-camp, Colonel Count Ledochowski and Lieutenant-Colonel Brougier, were also at the meal. The Emperor at once began to talk of our old friendship, revived old memories, and naturally and courteously drew everybody into the conversation. It was my first opportunity of observing the Emperor as Emperor. There was naturally no reference to politics and events at the Front in the talk, which moved among ordinary topics. It was only towards the end of the meal that we touched on

<sup>1</sup> The Emperor Karl had the intention at one time of appointing the Archduke Josef as Palatine, to counterbalance the growth of Tisza's power. The Archduke was received in secret audience to discuss the matter about the end of January or the beginning of February, 1917. The idea, however, was soon abandoned. The Emperor preferred to take direct measures and dismiss Tisza. On the 7th of February, Count Hunyady went to Budapest to request Tisza, in the Emperor's name, either to give way on the points on which he was in conflict with the Emperor or to resign. The immediate occasion for this step was Tisza's refusal to carry out the unification of the rationing system in Austria and Hungary which the Emperor was aiming at. But things happened as might have been foreseen. Count Tisza did not hand in his resignation, but gave way on the chief points. On the 13th February he appeared in audience at Baden, and agreed to the appointment of a general, directly responsible to the Emperor, to act as intermediary between the Austrian and Hungarian Ministries of Food.



rationing difficulties, and, later on, war profits. The Emperor said that wealth had been made in all wars; but that in this War, which had assumed unprecedented dimensions, it was the whole of the national wealth which was finding its way into the pockets of the war profiteers. If it were practicable, all the profits should be taken away from them again after the War. War should not be a boom period for business. Otherwise capital would have an interest in war, a thing that must be avoided. I was glad that the Emperor held this view, but considered it somewhat imprudent in him to give it expression, for capital is a great power, which may be dangerous if it feels itself threatened.

After we rose from table, the Emperor kept me behind and went on with the discussion of the details of my work.

I gave a full report of my taking over office, and of the impression I had received of the arrangements. These could not be improved upon, I said; I had never encountered such perfect organization in any office. "That was the school of the Emperor Franz Joseph," said His Majesty. Then I told him of the existence of the locked pocket-book which had belonged to the late Crown Prince. The Emperor showed great interest in this news. He thought for a little and then said: "The preservation of this pocket-book under lock and key in the Private Office is certainly to be traced back to an order of His late Majesty. The order was undoubtedly not given without reason. The pocket-book should therefore remain locked up in the Private Office. Let us leave the dead in peace."<sup>1</sup>

The interview was frequently disturbed by conversations on the telephone. His Majesty received on this occasion the news of a threatening attitude on the part of Spain, due to the intensified submarine warfare. He was greatly agitated by the news, telephoned it to Her Majesty while I was there, and then turned to me and said: "I was always opposed to submarine warfare, and I fought against it with all the means in my power, but I could do nothing. Now the United States have already broken off relations, and Spain may follow. The War will only assume even greater proportions, and we shall be further and further removed from peace. It is terrible.

<sup>1</sup> For the fate and the contents of the pocket-book see Appendix IV.

Germany always under-estimates her enemies; now she is under-estimating the United States and over-estimating herself. Berlin has been struck with blindness and will plunge us into ruin."

The Emperor gave me some further directions, instructed me to discuss with Hohenlohe the provision of apartments for me in the Hofburg, and then dismissed me.

## II

I left the Emperor's study in a gloomy frame of mind. I had had no idea of his attitude to the question of intensified submarine warfare. I had regarded it as a matter of course that such a step could only be taken in the case of a particularly favourable military situation, in order to make use of it to overpower the enemy by this last terrible weapon, and thus enforce peace. Now I was forced to conclude from the Emperor's utterances that the military situation was not only not favourable, but was almost desperate. But I had also been compelled to see that the Emperor had been unable to enforce his will in a matter on the successful issue of which the very existence of the Empire depended. From the statement which Count Czernin gives of the reasons which led to acceptance of more drastic submarine warfare, I know that these reasons lacked compelling logical force. Count Czernin writes that for a time he discussed the idea of "proposing to the Emperor that we should separate from Germany on this question, although it was obvious to me that such a separation might easily mean the beginning of the end of the alliance. But the difficulty was that submarine warfare must also be carried on in the Mediterranean unless it was to be completely ineffective in northern waters; if the Mediterranean remained free, troops could be transported by this route, and then by land through Italy and France to Dover, and the northern submarine warfare thus be made ineffective. But, in order to carry on submarine warfare in the Mediterranean, Germany required our harbours in the Adriatic, Trieste, Pola, and Cattaro, and if we allowed her to use them, we were taking

part in the submarine war, even though our submarines remained at home; if we did not allow her to use them, we were attacking Germany in the rear, and so would come into direct conflict with her, which was bound to lead to a definite disruption of the alliance. . . . So we very reluctantly gave our consent. . . . If we could have deterred Germany from more intensified submarine warfare, it would have been a very great advantage" (Czernin, *Im Weltkriege*, pp. 167 and 168).

These quotations reveal that Count Czernin realized the difficulties in which Austria was involved by the intensification of submarine warfare. It is, accordingly, very curious that in the negotiations with the German representatives he did nothing whatever to "deter" the Germans from taking this step; for the arguments which he and his friend Tisza produced against submarine warfare were merely arguments the counter-arguments to which were already known. Count Czernin could not seriously have thought that he would convince the German representatives, who had come to Vienna with their minds firmly made up, with the "objections" and "doubts" which he is reported to have brought forward in the minutes of the negotiations. A repetition of the arguments for and against which were already familiar to both sides was thus quite purposeless and might as well never have been made. If Count Czernin had really had the intention of making every possible effort to "deter" Germany from more drastic submarine warfare, he would at least have had to bring forward fresh arguments of paramount importance. The negotiations would have certainly taken a different turn and passed far beyond empty formalities if Count Czernin—I will confine myself to reliance on his own ideas—had declared that Austria must separate from Germany on this question, and would naturally be unable to permit Germany to claim "our ports in the Adriatic" for her intensified submarine warfare. Count Czernin must have realized that what he imagined to be a "difficulty" was a tactical advantage to Austria. It is true that, compared to Germany, we Austrians were the "weak party," but I believe that in this case we had in our hand a decisive advantage which we could have used. For with regard to her decision to carry on more drastic submarine warfare, Germany was dependent on us to the extent

that, if we refused, she had the choice between, according to Czernin, embarking on ineffective submarine warfare, or carrying on the war in "splendid isolation" even against us. Whether, instead of making a choice between these two alternatives, which could not in any case have been favourable to her, she would have given up the idea of more drastic submarine warfare altogether, will always remain an open question, in spite of all the views expressed by Count Czernin on the subject. It would at least have been desirable to put it to the test. One must not, of course, push it too far. It would, however, have needed no subtle machiavellian ruse, but merely a quite obvious consideration, to come to a decision to separate from an ally whose methods we had recognized as endangering our very existence, if that ally, relying on the power of the stronger, refused to abandon these methods. Berlin had the choice, and in any case her fate was in her own hands. No one could have complained of "treachery." *The obligations of an alliance cannot be pressed so far as to call for the deliberate sacrifice of your own country if your ally, purely in her own interest and with no regard for imperilling your existence, obstinately tries to force you on a path which you are convinced will lead to ruin.*

In any case our acceptance of submarine warfare should have been made on conditions which would have raised us out of our state of impotent dependence. But the arguments, the objections and doubts, expressed by Count Czernin and Count Tisza at the negotiations, cannot even be regarded as a modest attempt to divert the Germans from their resolution. We may be grateful to Count Czernin for this detailed account of the submarine warfare negotiations, which gave the public an opportunity of seeing one example of how he conducted negotiations of this kind, in order to break the reputedly inflexible will of the German military party. It is possible, however, that Holtzendorff's statements and his assurance that England would very soon be forced by this means to sue for peace had a persuasive effect, and that the Austrian leaders could not face the responsibility of rejecting a method of warfare proposed by Germany, which apparently promised certain success. Retrospective criticism of events made when the results are known would be of no value if the

psychological factor of the uncertainty of the issue and the heavy responsibility of decision were not taken into account. From Count Czernin's description of the negotiations which led up to intensified submarine warfare, the chief fact that emerges is that he did not until later form the opinion that it would have been a very great advantage if we could have dissuaded Germany from this policy, and that, at the time of the negotiations, he felt unable to bear the responsibility of rejecting unlimited submarine warfare. That would be a defensible point of view, for it is certain that neither the one nor the other side could reckon with mathematical certainty in estimating the probabilities of success. Both could only surmise. But in that case it would have been the duty of the then responsible Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister, in order to guard the interests of the Monarchy, to give his consent only on conditions which, from a specified date, would not only have left us a completely free hand, but would have released us once for all from dependence on Germany. Merely to express "objections," as Count Tisza and Czernin did at the negotiations, was in any case inadequate. Count Czernin, as appears from the sum total of his description, has obviously tried to shift the burden of the failure of his policy on to the German Supreme Command, whose obstinate will he apparently could not break. In Count Czernin Hindenburg and Ludendorff had not a partner of their own stature, of equal strength of will.

The fact that Ludendorff, in his anxiety for the fruits of his labour, interfered in politics and was assuredly guilty of fatal encroachments, and that he also tried to steer the political course of Austria, as he wished—and to some extent succeeded in doing so—is, if not excusable, at least understandable. He could find no resolute political will among us, and so he imposed his own will. The fault lay ultimately, therefore, not in his stubbornness, but in our incapacity to break it. If Count Czernin had controlled his domain of politics with the same sovereign will as Ludendorff controlled his trade of war, the latter would have acquiesced in the distribution of parts. On 20th January, 1917, the question of intensified submarine warfare was discussed in Vienna at a joint Council of Ministers, under the chairmanship of the

Emperor and in consultation with Zimmermann, the German Secretary of State, and Holtzendorff, the chief of the German Naval Staff. The chief of the Austrian General Staff, Conrad von Hötzendorf and Admiral Haus were also present. Admiral von Holtzendorff expatiated on the necessity of applying the weapon of more drastic submarine warfare; for, by the end of 1917, Germany would be exhausted. The enemy must, therefore, be compelled to sue for peace before then: Germany had now, he said, a hundred and twenty submarines at her disposal. By an adequate and progressive increase in their number, the effects of this drastic weapon would lead to success in five or six months under any conditions; he would personally guarantee this. Admiral Haus and Conrad von Hötzendorf agreed. Czernin said neither yes nor no; he refused to show his colours plainly, and merely expressed a vigorous anxiety about the attitude of the neutral powers. The Emperor Karl, who had been opposed to unlimited submarine warfare from the very outset, closed the meeting without speaking the decisive word. After the Council of Ministers, Holtzendorff was received in audience by His Majesty. On this occasion, the Emperor refused his consent in the most definite manner. When Admiral von Holtzendorff saw all his arguments and all his open threats of what would happen in the event of a refusal of consent bound off the Emperor's absolute and categorical rejection, he stood up and declared that it no longer depended on His Majesty's consent, that the orders had been issued early that morning and that the submarines had already set out. It was no longer possible to reach them even by the aid of wireless. Several ships might have already been sunk. In these circumstances, there was nothing for the Emperor to do but to give his consent with indignant protest.

Some time later, on 2nd May, 1917, Admiral von Holtzendorff was again in Vienna. He was invited to lunch at Baden along with his staff, Captains Grosshof and Heyer, and the naval attaché, Commander Freiherr von Freyberg. He thought fit to apostrophize Her Majesty in this fashion:

"I am aware that you are an opponent of submarine warfare. You are against the War altogether."

"I am against the War," replied the Empress, "like

every woman who would rather see people happy than suffering."

This was not a sufficient lesson for Holtzendorff, who replied: "Suffering, what does that matter? I work best on an empty stomach; you just have to tighten your belt and stick it out."

The Empress closed the conversation with the words: "I dislike to hear talk of sticking it out at a well-spread table."

The Emperor, who was sitting opposite Her Majesty, fortunately did not hear the conversation. But he noticed that the Empress did not condescend to give the Admiral a single glance. After lunch he asked her the reason and learned the subject of the conversation at table.

### III

I now took over the control of an office which was excellently organized and worked like a chronometer. My colleagues, especially the two chiefs of section, Dr. Mikeš and Baron Weber, of whom the former had belonged to the judicial profession and the latter to diplomacy, were trusty pillars of the Private Office, as reliable in exact office work as they were experienced in all questions of Court etiquette, men of rare character, as they could not have failed to become and remain after years of confidential service with the Emperor Franz Joseph. As the sphere of influence of the Emperor's Private Office covered the whole Monarchy, the lands belonging to the Reichsrat and Hungary were represented in it by their own officials. The polyglot nature of the Hapsburg Empire found full expression in this office. Business was carried on in all the tongues spoken in Austria and Hungary, and also in French and English.

"The head of the Emperor's Private Office is the father-confessor of the Monarchy." I have read that sentence somewhere. No more exact description exists of the idea which the public held of the head of the Emperor's Private Office. I found that out at the very beginning of my activities. Petitions, information, memoranda, complaints, and queries

poured in from all sections of society, from all political camps and all countries. It was thought that the Emperor's secretary was all-powerful, that he could make the Emperor do whatever he liked. He saw the Emperor daily, almost hourly. Nothing happened without his knowledge and participation; he might be said to guide the Emperor's pen. And it was thought to be due solely to the ill-will of the secretary if petitions were not granted, if politics were not carried on in accordance with the proposals set forth in the memoranda, or if the complaints were not immediately answered by penal investigations. It is certain that many of the heads of the Imperial Office in other Monarchies and even under Austrian rulers did possess this omnipotence; but it was not so under the Emperor Karl. But the idea existed, and it was further strengthened by all sorts of myths and legends about my old "friendship" with my sovereign. This was wildly exaggerated and embroidered with all kinds of tales that were pure inventions; it was taken for granted that there was a "camarilla," and that I had a seat and a voice on it. The know-alls were also exactly acquainted with what was done by the camarilla. It removed Koerber and the Calvinist, Tisza, from office, and at my prompting and that of Aulic Councillor Lammasch, it hatched out the amnesty for the Slav politicians; from it also, of course, with the active co-operation of the Empress, news was supplied to the enemy, Italy, in particular. It is a fact that people spread absurd stories of this kind, and that they even penetrated to the Front. This was the result of the splendidly organized Northcliffe propaganda, which found willing agents in the enemies of the dynasty, the Pan-Germans, and in the gossips of all tongues. Vienna actually believed that the Empress cherished friendly sentiments towards Italy. It truly implies a high degree of ignorance to believe that a member of the Parma family could have any special sympathy for the kingdom of Italy, and not to know that the Empress belonged not to an Italian race, but to the royal house of Bourbon. In a book written by Karl Nowak on Conrad von Hötzendorf, for which the latter is alleged to have supplied the material, the following grotesque sentence actually occurs: "There are certain lines in the Parma family tree which lead across to the Bourbons" (*sic!*).



All and sundry were also well informed on the subject of the Emperor's dissipated life. The tale that he was a drunkard was in general circulation. This vile slander was, I deeply regret to state, credited in all circles of the population, even among the nobility, and still is believed to some extent. I knew the Emperor Karl for about fifteen years. When I was his private secretary, I saw him almost daily, and at all hours of the day. But I never saw the smallest thing which could, by the widest stretch of imagination, have afforded any ground for this malicious gossip. The Emperor, except at the chief meal of the day, at which he generally, but not regularly, took a glass of wine or beer, never tasted any alcoholic beverage. But the rumour existed. It even reached the Emperor's own ears. Once when he was ill and the doctor prescribed brandy to be taken as a tonic at certain hours of the day, the Emperor refused to follow this advice, because it would immediately be rumoured that he had now taken to drinking spirits.

Repulsive as it is to speak of such things, I have thought it necessary to mention those strange and grotesque rumours and stories, because without doubt there was a system behind them. There could be no better method of preparing for the revolution than by robbing the Emperor of his popularity. But as nothing was known, people clutched at every possible thread, filled up the gaps from their own imagination, and took care that all the tales were circulated with the utmost expedition.

“ As I have always heard say,  
Peeping Toms and scandalmongers  
Have wrought more evil in this world  
Than dagger or poison in murderous hands.”

I shall now return to facts. A few days after I took over my new position, I made my official calls on the members of the Imperial House who were in Vienna, and on the Court dignitaries and Ministers. My first visit was paid to Prince Konrad Hohenlohe, who welcomed my appointment to this confidential post with feelings of lively satisfaction. He said to me that I was the only person at Court who really knew the Emperor and had been intimate with him from his young

days. That would make my work much easier, but it also made it my duty to speak to the Emperor plainly and without reserve, as might be demanded and expected from a confidential secretary. In his impulsive fashion, he seized both my hands and said that we must conclude a firm alliance of mutual confidence and maintain it resolutely, in order to protect the young Emperor from all danger. For him we must do our very utmost. "A very serious time is in front of us," he added. "I cannot discern to-day even the faint outlines of the peace which the Emperor is striving for with all his heart and with so much conviction." The pact then concluded both Konrad Hohenlohe and I always loyally maintained. We discussed many important affairs, and our deliberations never failed to result in mutual agreement. There was never any misunderstanding between us.

On 20th February I went to Budapest with one of the Hungarian officials of the Private Office, in order to present myself as its head in Hungary. I was not personally acquainted with Count Tisza. I was very curious about the impression I would gain of this man, to whose policy I had devoted particular study. I sent in my name through an official on 21st February. After a few moments, I entered the office of this, the most powerful man in Hungary. Count Tisza rose from his desk, came a few steps towards me and shook hands without a word. We sat down facing each other at a table covered with books and papers. After I had briefly stated the object of my visit, a considerable pause ensued. Count Tisza looked at me from behind his dark glasses in silence. I, too, kept silence. It was his turn to speak. I thought that he would first have to overcome the annoyance he must have felt at an Austrian official's being again put at the head of the Private Office. I tried in vain to see his eyes behind the dark glass of his spectacles. Then he forced himself to utter a few words of thanks to me for waiting upon him. I replied that I had assumed office on 6th February, but had unfortunately been unable to pay my official calls earlier. Then Tisza again fell silent. Suppressed hostility had been audible in the tone of his voice. I began to understand his mind. My appointment had taken him by surprise; he had had his own plans for filling this post, the importance of

which he was too shrewd to under-estimate. Count Klebelsberg had been his candidate. He was also, of course, aware that I was on more intimate terms with the Emperor than any previous head of the Emperor's Private Office had been. That might be inconvenient. He must counterbalance this by the power of his own position. So he kept silence. I had no occasion to speak. There was a wordless struggle, of which we were both conscious in this mutual silence, until at last he broke it. The following rapid fire of dialogue then took place:

*Count Tisza.* "I have not yet discussed with His Majesty the matter of the appointment of a Hungarian chief of section in the Private Office. It is a very important question."

The very first sentence was a challenge. He wished me to understand by this that he had the decisive voice. I parried at once.

*Myself.* "Certainly this personal matter must be carefully handled. But I cannot regard it as such a very important question, for in the last resort it is merely a matter of filling a post politically of no significance in the Emperor's office. Besides the Emperor was gracious enough to discuss the question thoroughly with me on the occasion of my first report, and to instruct me to propose a candidate. I should be very grateful to Your Excellency if you would give me your assistance in the matter."

*Count Tisza.* "It would assuredly be a mistake to under-estimate the importance of this post. No one will be guilty of such a mistake. The senior Hungarian official in the Private Office is Aulic Councillor Baron Nagy. He would be quite unsuitable for the post, as he speaks and writes Hungarian imperfectly, and is quite unfamiliar with conditions in Hungary. His brother, I know, is in a Bohemian regiment."

*Myself.* "To the best of my knowledge, the brother of Aulic Councillor Baron Nagy is a lieutenant-colonel in the common army."

*Count Tisza.* "Well, as I have said, Baron Nagy is not suitable; the post calls for an exact knowledge of Hungarian conditions, and a perfect mastery of the Hungarian language. Baron Nagy possesses neither."

*Myself.* "Knowledge of the Hungarian language is in all events necessary, all the more so because, as I am informed, Hungarian laws have ceased for some time to be translated into German, as was formerly the custom. However, I have been assured in many quarters—personally I cannot judge—that Baron Nagy is perfectly acquainted with Hungarian."

Count Tisza again fell silent. We sat opposite each other like panthers ready to spring.

*Count Tisza.* "As I have already said, I must consider the matter very carefully."

But this was too much for me. It was a question of a confidential position with the Emperor, not with the Prime Minister of Hungary. An official dependent on the latter in this post would have been a great misfortune. I asked myself whether Count Tisza could mean that he was the ruler, who had to decide everything. I stood up and said: "I shall certainly be very grateful to Your Excellency if you will nominate a suitable person for the post in the next few days; but I think I may say now that in all probability I shall propose Aulic Councillor Baron Nagy. He has been in the Private Office for a long time and knows the routine, and I think that His Majesty would have the necessary confidence in him, which, after all, is the great thing."

Count Tisza also got up slowly from his chair. He shook hands without a word and I took my leave. I never spoke to him again. He never forgave me for having dared to oppose him. Soon after Baron Nagy was, at my suggestion, appointed Hungarian chief of section in the Emperor's Office. The choice was entirely justified. Baron Nagy proved a correct and prudent official. His lack of familiarity with Hungarian conditions, alleged by Count Tisza, which was in reality a lack of bias towards Hungarian party politics, was a very great advantage. Nor did he prove to possess an inadequate mastery of the Hungarian language. No objection was ever raised on this account, and the despatches sent to Hungary from the Office were always composed in faultless Hungarian. As Baron Nagy's years of service in the Office had made him thoroughly familiar with the work, and as I could rely on him in all respects as I could on myself, it was possible for me to divide the work in so far as it related to Austrian and Hun-

garian affairs in the same way as it had been divided between my predecessor and Daruváry, his Hungarian chief of section. The division was so definite that the Emperor once observed to me at Reichenau—I forget what inspired the remark—that I had handed over Hungarian business entirely to Baron Nagy. He said he did not know how I had arranged matters, as I was still responsible to him for Hungarian affairs. I replied that I was quite conscious of this responsibility. All documents belonging to the Hungarian section were submitted to me before being reported on, and I was acquainted with everything that reached His Majesty. If anything struck me as being of particular importance, as had already happened in several cases, I felt it my duty to draw His Majesty's attention to it. I was able to recall one or two such cases to the Emperor's memory. But in view of Hungary's excessive touchiness, and its perpetual suspicion of interference in Hungarian affairs, even when the "interference" was entirely justified, I thought it wiser not to make any remarks on the subject to Baron Nagy, but to draw the Emperor's attention to it directly, before the documents on the subject were submitted to him. In actual fact cases in which resolutions put forward to the Emperor on Hungarian affairs were altered at my instance very seldom occurred.

In the early days of my appointment, my headquarters were in Vienna. I used to go to Baden twice or thrice a week to report, generally in the morning. In the day-time my time was entirely taken up with visits and the transaction of current business; it was only in the evenings that I had peace to devote myself to the study of the documents and Bills received on which I had to report to the Emperor, and of the mass of petitions, memoranda, and advice of a semi-official and private nature which were sent to me. I might have thrown the whole of these last into the fire without any neglect of my official duties, but I did not do so, for all these unofficial communications gave me an insight into the varied nature of the hopes which the people had set on their new ruler. The assured expectations of one group were opposed by those of another, which demanded the exact opposite; the conflict of expectations was politically, socially, and economically irreconcilable. Every one of these varied groups expected the

Emperor Karl to shape his course in the direction they desired. I knew that the company of the dissatisfied was bound to increase every day, for the number of those inevitably doomed to disappointment was legion.

The Emperor's private secretary was also his almoner. In this latter capacity, I was enabled to see deeply into the frightful misery of all those poor and lowly people who were among the victims of the War, the widows and orphans dependent on tiny pensions, who lived in the greatest poverty even in times of peace, and whose position had been rendered desperate by the rise in the cost of living. The private exchequer was somewhat low at the time when I assumed office, as the Emperor Karl's private property was considerably less than that of the Emperor Franz Joseph. But the demands on it increased daily, especially as the Emperor, in spite of all the remonstrances I made in duty bound, would not only not hear of any reduction in the relief of the poor from his private income, but even increased, often by a considerable amount, the sums to be given to the poor. In the end, when we were faced with a large deficit, and I brought the fact to the Emperor's notice, he laughed and said that the private exchequer must be doubled and that I must find the money. He added: "Don't look so anxious. You will contrive something, you must; you must see that the poorest of the poor can't be left to starve." I rummaged about among the archives and discovered that in Baron Braun's time the private exchequer had been deprived of a considerable subsidy from the vote for the Civil List. Baron Braun had been stubbornly opposed to this measure, and had finally consented only on condition that the withdrawal of the subsidy should be merely temporary. On the strength of this, I requested the Emperor to instruct his Chief Chamberlain that this yearly subsidy from the vote for the Civil List should again be paid to the private exchequer. The Emperor asked me whether I had discussed the matter with Hohenlohe and whether he agreed. I replied that I had not done so, and pointed out that Hohenlohe could not possibly agree, and that Baron Braun had not been asked, but had been faced with the fact of an Imperial decision. The Emperor laughed and said: "Well, if that's how the matter stands I will sign the instruction to Hohenlohe without

consulting him first." Thus the fund for the relief of the poor was saved.

There were frequently also extraordinary cases in which humble necessitous persons applied to me personally, and in which, when fairly large sums were in question, I had to get the Emperor's decision. I never met with a refusal. On the contrary, the Emperor always raised the amounts considerably, made exhaustive inquiries about the circumstances of the person concerned, and remarked that the sum would not last long; again and again I received instructions to keep in touch with the applicant and to inform him when further assistance was necessary. This was an expression not only of the Emperor's rare kindness of heart, but also of that excellence of character which took no account of his own interest. The Emperor was firmly convinced that the number of people he was able to help was infinitesimal in comparison with the number in need of help. He said to me once—it was when I made my evening report on 28th April, 1917—"The only thing to do is to help so far as is in our power. As Emperor, I must set a good example. If only everyone would do his duty as a Christian there would not be so much hatred and misery in the world."

To the earliest days of my new work belonged also the Emperor's order that the Court horses and wagons should be used for supplying coal to Vienna. This thoughtful measure evoked widespread recognition just because it was outside convention and tradition; but it was also interpreted by grumbling and envious persons, who, themselves lacking all unselfish qualities, imagine that others do not possess them either, as an attempt to gain popularity cheaply. The scarcity of coal which occurred during the severest part of the winter caused the Emperor to devote much thought to the question of remedial measures. He said again and again how it troubled him to have his own Viennese in want, for it was the very people whose attitude to the War had been so wonderful that were so badly hit. Every order was the result of the Emperor's own initiative. It is true that no important matter was at stake, but it showed good judgment on the part of the Emperor, when he used his power to sweep aside bureaucratic and Court difficulties even in questions of everyday human

needs, and thus to accomplish much good. When the Emperor was discussing with me this order, which was outside my province, he said: "Yes, I am thinking of my Viennese. They truly deserve admiration for the way they bear all these terrible privations without grumbling."

The audience system underwent a complete change under the Emperor Karl. The Emperor Franz Joseph had clung to the old ceremonial. A strict distinction was drawn between general audiences, which the Emperor gave on specified days to Court dignitaries making their yearly attendance, to persons submitting petitions or returning thanks for a privilege, an order or an appointment granted to them, and the "special" audiences which the Emperor gave to eminent personages. To the category of special audiences belonged also the reception of Ministers and other State functionaries and dignitaries who had to make a report on any subject. Finally, provision was also made for audiences accompanied by special formalities for the ambassadors of foreign States. When the Emperor Karl, at the very beginning of his reign, expressed a wish to see one of the ambassadors accredited to the Court, he was asked whether he would receive him at the general audiences, in "special audience," or with the formalities customary for ambassadors. The Emperor replied: "It's all the same to me, I want to have a talk with him." Requests for audiences were submitted to His Majesty through the head of the Military Chancery, the head of the Private Office and the Ministers. Often the Emperor's desire to see this or that person was the result of his own initiative. The Emperor usually decided in the evening, after the last report, whom he was to receive next day. He notified the aide-de-camp on duty of the day and hour of the audience, and the aide-de-camp either informed the head of the Military Chancery or the Private Office, so that they could inform those commanded to appear in audience, or sometimes he communicated directly with the persons concerned. During the reign of the Emperor Franz Joseph it had also been the aides-de-camp who looked after the notification of special audiences, in particular, those of Ministers submitting reports.

The distinction between general and special audiences



disappeared almost entirely, which was due not only to the extraordinary conditions occasioned by the War, but also to the modest and natural character of the Emperor Karl, who wanted to simplify the ceremonial as far as possible and limit it to public occasions. But even this was objected to and severely criticized by the grumblers. Without doubt there would have been no lack of fault-finding based on the reverse arguments if the Emperor had adopted the opposite attitude. Court etiquette was also kept within natural limits by the young ruler. He regarded its maintenance to a certain extent as a necessary evil; but he loved to get rid of it if other considerations appeared to him to be more important. And this happened not seldom. A little episode enacted when the dead bodies of the murdered heir to the Throne and his wife arrived in Vienna is typical of this tendency of the Emperor. The Court-ceremonial department had worked out in detail the exact point on the railway platform to which the new heir-apparent might go to meet the train on which the dead bodies were being conveyed, as regard must be paid to the fact that it was not only the corpse of the Archduke that was in question, but also that of the Duchess of Hohenberg, whom Court etiquette did not regard as his equal in birth. As the train steamed into the station, the Archduke Karl, deeply moved, went to meet it. The officials tried to prevent him going any further. He pushed aside the barrier with great irritation, saying: "This is all rubbish. These are the dead bodies of my uncle and his faithful wife. Etiquette has got nothing to do with it." This incident and many similar ones were serious crimes against the sacred laws of the Court, the members of which shook their heads anxiously. It is not surprising that people with this kind of mentality were severely critical of the new regime. In these circles the Northcliffe propaganda, which worked against the dynasty with the most infernal means, found most willing although unconscious agents. The often malicious influence of certain former Court dignitaries, who were angry at being left in the cold, and other hitherto influential persons also did a great deal of harm.

## IV

I did not come into close contact with the Imperial household until the 15th of March, 1917, when Their Majesties moved to Laxenburg. The Emperor decreed that I was in future to live and have my office at Laxenburg. In the mornings and evenings I was present at the "Marshal's Table," at which the more intimate circle of the household assembled in the so-called old Laxenburg Schloss, the Empress's ladies-in-waiting, the Countess Nora Nostiz, who was engaged to Count Attems, Her Majesty's chamberlain, Countess Agnes Schönborn, a cousin of the Empress, and Frau von Kállay, who were on duty in turn, the Adjutant-General, Prince Zdenko Lobkowitz, the aides-de-camp on duty, Count Attems, the Court Chaplain, Bishop Seydl, and the officers on duty of the Life Guards Cavalry Squadron and the Life Guards Infantry Company. The aides-de-camp at this time were Lieutenant Colonel Count Ledochowski, Colonel Freiherr von Catinelli, Colonel Brougier, Commander von Schonta and Count Hunyady, afterwards Chief Court Chamberlain, who, although the dignity of a *Geheimer Rat*, which he possessed, was not quite consonant with his functions as aide-de-camp, had sufficient tact to get over the slight awkwardness of his position. Occasionally the head of the Military Chancery, Adjutant-General Freiherr von Marterer, came to Laxenburg from Baden, where he had his regular headquarters, and from time to time the Empress's Chief Chamberlain, Count Alexander Esterházy, was present at the Marshal's Table.

Quite a wrong idea is almost generally held of the part played by Prince Zdenko Lobkowitz. It is true that, as His Majesty's adjutant-general, he formed part of the Emperor's suite on all public occasions, but he had no political influence. Lobkowitz did not report except very rarely. When he had to report on service questions relating to the adjutant-generalship and asked His Majesty for an audience, the Emperor would put him off from day to day on the plea that the business was not important. The Emperor really had time only for very important affairs; he worked every day

from eight in the morning till late in the evening, generally until ten or eleven o'clock. Lobkowitz often asked me to draw His Majesty's attention to the pile of business which had accumulated. The Prince is a man of rare distinction, and frank and sincere character, universally popular, without a single enemy; he is a pleasant social companion, who has always a witty saying on his tongue, which he utters with the utmost seriousness. His sentiments are merely those of an Austrian patriot, "black-yellow," nothing more. He did not trouble himself about politics. Loyalty to his Emperor and master was everything to him. It is perfectly ridiculous to find insinuations of all sorts of political intrigues subsequently made against him by writers of memoirs.

The cuisine was excellent, though of a simplicity suitable in time of war. Even here there were regulations, which had to be observed. When the asparagus season came round, and practically nothing but asparagus, at low prices, was to be found in the markets of Vienna, we were surprised that we never had any. We remarked on this to the "competent" department. This at first caused embarrassment, but when we insisted and asked the reason, we were told that asparagus was included among the *entremets de légume*, and was not proper for the Marshal's Table. When we asked for asparagus as an ordinary vegetable without any label, no further objection was raised, and asparagus was served to us, but not in the place on the menu proper to asparagus according to Court etiquette.

The Emperor used to drive in the mornings from Laxenburg to Baden, where he spent the forenoon in receiving military reports and giving audiences. During the journey there he usually read the diplomatic report for the day, which was sent direct to him from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. He returned at noon to Laxenburg, where the political receptions and civil audiences and reports took place. They began in the early afternoon, and lasted continuously until late in the evening. When the weather at all permitted, the receptions and audiences took place in the Park. The Emperor generally sat, with a coat on, in the shade of a group of ancient plane trees. In the distance, on the sunny meadows of the Park, one could see the Imperial children playing and hear their

happy laughter and shouts. One or other of them would often come up to the Emperor to say something to him or to ask him a question. I was always glad when I saw the Crown Prince, with his fair curls, bright eyes, and clear little voice, which could be heard at a distance, and which had a peculiarly muffled, almost melancholy, undertone. With great ingenuity and obvious pleasure he directed all the various games and childish enterprises of his younger brothers and sisters. Sometimes the Emperor preferred, instead of sitting under the plane trees, to walk about listening to reports. As he was in the habit of walking extraordinarily fast and taking gigantic strides, the wind and the sun often landed me in the most awkward situations. I had to be exceptionally familiar with the documents, as the Emperor was not satisfied with listening to a final report, but was always interrupting me with questions. These were framed in such a manner as to raise the most important points, which made the work very much easier. It was altogether a pleasure to work with the Emperor. Everything went so smoothly and rapidly. And just as he put precise questions, so also he gave clear instructions. One was never in any doubt of what he meant and what he wanted. The questions on which I had to report were of the most varied character, and came from all the Ministries and Court offices. The Emperor was always equally on the spot; he always gave his whole attention to the matter under discussion. I have served under many Ministers and can claim a certain amount of experience in judging intellectual capacity for grasping a subject. In many of my chiefs and the Ministers under whom I had to serve, I frequently found a dragging, heavy power of apprehension, and, still more frequently, a remarkable lack of interest. But in the case of the Emperor Karl, work was always lively and stimulating. I was not a little astonished when it came to my ears, first, it is true, at the time of the Revolution, that the Emperor's intellectual powers were not rated very highly. I should have regarded anything as more likely than that I should one day find myself called upon to enlighten the world on this point. Even to-day I am still quite unable to imagine how such a preposterous idea about the Emperor Karl could have arisen. It is remarkable to find that it is just those people who

were intellectually and morally far inferior to the Emperor that one hears expressing an unfavourable opinion of him.

The Emperor conducted business with great ability. Many Ministers have told me that, after conferences of the Crown Council, which often lasted for hours, he would sum up with an ease, fluency, and clearness which many experienced statesmen might have envied. He was lacking only in experience and routine of business. Routine he hated. How often he has said to me that routine, eel-smooth political prudence, killed every good impulse.

When my report was made in the evening, the Empress was generally present. She sat apart as a rule, reading or writing letters. Her assistance was purely passive. Occasionally she would ask me to tell her about the position of this or that affair, never anything of importance. It was only very seldom that she would make a remark if the Emperor was discussing political matters with me. Her remarks were always to the point, never irrelevant. The Empress's presence at the evening report disturbed me at first. One can defend oneself against spoken criticism, but against silent criticism one is powerless. And there sat Her Majesty in the Emperor's study, while I made my report, and listened with quiet attention. Very soon, however, I was convinced from casual remarks that the Empress made that a benevolent interest in all the various questions on which I reported, and which were often of such vital importance for human fates, was the mood, in which she listened to the reports. The Empress's presence at the evening report also became the subject of criticism, and was interpreted as desire to interfere in Government business. If this had been true she would have been present at reports made at other times, and not only in the evenings. But this never happened so long as I was the Emperor's secretary. Only in the evenings, when her day's duties were over and the children had been put to bed, did the Empress come to the Emperor's study. How often I have regretted that so few people had the opportunity of seeing the Empress in the family circle, when she was free from Court formalities, and to get to know her great and modest distinction of character. The War, the many political and personal considerations, the everlasting misinterpretation of all she did

and all she did not do, had made her timid, and she became more retiring than was desirable for her own sake.

Casual utterances of the Empress showed me that she felt a great interest in Hungary. She regarded it as politically the more stable part of the Monarchy. It was quite natural for her to feel like this; she saw the national heedlessness, the dissensions in the Austrian Parliament, and, in contrast to this, the unified national idea in the Hungarian Parliament. She saw the politicians and Ministers of Hungary, the Andrássys, Zichys, and Apponyis, observed their statesman-like calm, assurance, and worldly wisdom, qualities which, in conjunction with the fiery patriotism of which she had had convincing evidence at the time of the Coronation, might well have been enough to win her confidence. To this was added the judgment she had formed from her own immediate entourage, her Chamberlain, since dead, Count Alexander Esterházy, a man of the highest and fullest culture from his heart to his finger tips, her distinguished equerry, Prince Pálffy, the aide-de-camp, Count Josef Hunyady, devoted to the Emperor, a man of absolute reliability. The choice of the Imperial entourage had been arranged in a manner very favourable to Hungary. And the Empress was a crowned queen in Hungary, her husband a crowned king. She knew the almost mystical reverence of Hungary for the sacred crown of St. Stephen. Did she discover that this mystical reverence was for the crown rather than for its wearer?

In the months of February and March, 1917, I had no further opportunity or occasion to draw the Emperor's attention to the dangers threatening the Empire from the pursuance of Tisza's policy. The Emperor at that time discussed with me neither questions of home nor foreign policy. It was only occasionally that he gave me information about the chief happenings, from which I was able to keep myself posted about his political tendencies. I maintained a watching attitude. The Austrian Prime Minister, Count Clam, was engaged in settling the internal political situation in Austria, in order to lay the foundations for his real task, preparing the way for the summoning of the Austrian Parliament and concluding a long-term Compromise with Hungary.

On the question of the electoral law, Count Tisza was

fundamentally opposed to the Emperor. This was reassuring, and removed apprehension of a threatening political turn of events from this quarter. I was chiefly engaged in watching Count Czernin's policy. He appeared in audience almost every day, and in the evenings, usually when I was making my report, a lengthy telephonic conversation took place between him and the Emperor. I had no doubt that his influence would not have such an important effect on the Emperor, who was firmly decided in his views and aims, as on the course of events, whether in a good or a bad sense I had no means of judging; I lacked all the necessary data.

In the middle of March, 1917, I was definitely appointed head of the Emperor's Private Office, and given the rank of a *Geheimrat*. Simultaneously came my appointment as Chancellor of the Order of the Golden Fleece, an honorary office long held by the head of the Private Office. My appointment followed automatically on the voluntary resignation of Freiherr von Schiessl from this office, to which the holder was appointed for life.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE ITALIAN NEGOTIATIONS OF 1914 AND 1915, THE EMPEROR KARL'S EFFORTS TO SECURE PEACE IN THE SPRING OF 1917, AND THE "SIXTUS LETTERS"

"L'Empereur Charles a offert la paix ; c'est le seul honnête homme qui ait paru au cours de cette guerre, on ne l'a pas écouté. . . .

"L'Empereur Charles veut sincèrement la paix, aussi tout le monde le déteste."—ANATOLE FRANCE.

#### I

**I**NFLUENTIAL circles in Germany during the War were exclusively concerned with their own interests. Their point of view became obvious for the first time when, at the end of 1914 and the beginning of 1915, Italy's claims to compensation under Article 7 of the Triple Alliance Treaty came up for political discussion. I was always well informed about the course of events: the Archduke Karl Franz Joseph frequently invited me to accompany him on the journeys which he made from time to time between Vienna and Teschen. On these occasions he often spoke about this matter, which was of such importance for the fate of the Monarchy. His ideas on the subject did not differ from those of the Emperor Franz Joseph. As early as 12th December, 1914,<sup>1</sup> the day after the great reverse in Serbia, the Emperor Franz Joseph expressed to the head of the Military Chancery, Freiherr von Bolfras, his decided opposition to the cession of the South Tyrol to Italy. On 8th January, 1915, Adjutant-General Count Paar broached to His Majesty the idea, suggested to him by the Military Chancery, of sending the heir-apparent, the Archduke Karl, to Rome to negotiate with the King of Italy. The Emperor replied that he could not believe in active intervention against Austria-Hungary on Italy's part. There was no reason for it. However, since the death of the Italian Minister, the Marquis de San Giuliano, in the middle of October, and especially after the great military reverses,

<sup>1</sup> On 11th December the Italian Ambassador, the Duke of Avarna, spoke for the first time to Berchtold about the necessity for compensation negotiations.



the negotiations between Vienna and Rome had been taking on an increasingly threatening aspect. The Austrian point of view had been considerably prejudiced by the discussions carried on behind our back with the Italian Government by the German Ambassador, Prince Bülow, who was formally holding out to Italy the prospect<sup>1</sup> of the cession of Trento. Count Berchtold, on whom the German Ambassador, Tschirschky, had been using his influence, in view of the general position, supported the view that Austria must now enter on negotiations with Italy, since doubts as to Italy's continued neutrality were highly dangerous. On 10th January, 1915, a conference took place in the Ballhausplatz between Berchtold, Stürgkh, Tisza, and Burian. There Berchtold found no supporters. He met with determined opposition not only from Tisza, but also from Stürgkh, who took the view that cession of the Trento would make the worst possible impression on the popular temper and might ultimately involve the surrender of the North Tyrol to Bavaria. Both Berchtold and Tisza made a report on the subject to the Emperor. The former stated that he adhered to his former views, and could not accept the responsibility for the continuation of Italian neutrality. When Count Wedel, who had been sent by the German Government for the purpose of influencing Austria along the lines of the agreements between Bülow and Sonnino, was in Vienna on 12th January, he found Count Berchtold already *in statu demissionis*: his retirement was approved by the Emperor on 13th January.

Tisza, who was first approached about taking over the Foreign Office, declined on the ground that he regarded his remaining in his post as Prime Minister of Hungary as absolutely necessary in view of political conditions in Hungary. Freiherr von Burian was thereupon appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs. In January, 1915, when there was still a hope of being able to withdraw troops from Galicia in the not too distant future, it was certainly the right course to reject the unreasonable demands of Italy, especially as the diplomatic negotiations made it clear that Italy would raise her demands if Austria showed weakness, and, in addition to the South Tyrol, would demand Trieste and Dalmatia. The

<sup>1</sup> For further details see page 265.

Archduke Karl told me that the Emperor Franz Joseph had characterized Italy's exactions as blackmail, and naturally could not yield to them. But, as Berlin from the very outset had taken up the attitude that Austria absolutely must sacrifice the Trentino, and stubbornly adhered to this view, the Emperor Franz Joseph decided to send the heir-apparent to German Headquarters at Charleville, in order that he might bring the views of the Austrian Government on this question before the Emperor Wilhelm. The Archduke set off on 20th January, 1915. The arguments he adduced made an impression on the Emperor Wilhelm. He could not deny their justice from Austria's point of view. When the Archduke emphasized the fact that the Tyrol and the Adriatic were no less important to Austria than Alsace-Lorraine to Germany, and that Austria had as much right to demand the sacrifice of Alsace-Lorraine by Germany, which incidentally would offer a far greater prospect of putting an end to the War, the Emperor Wilhelm, with his undeniable understanding of the difficult position of his ally, ventured to introduce into the discussion the question of compensation for Austria in case of her having to surrender the South Tyrol. The eventual transfer of the petty State of Berchtesgaden or the county (*Grafschaft*) of Glatz was actually discussed in influential circles, without, however, any result.

On the subject of the visit of the Archduke Karl to Charleville, Infantry-General Count Josef Stürgkh, who was at that time our representative at German G.H.Q., writes as follows:

"Clearly the mission entrusted to the young Archduke, who was facing for the first time an assembly so imposing as G.H.Q. must have been for him, was no very easy one, especially as there was no one in his suite who would have been much support to him. It was, of course, possible for me, and it was assuredly my duty to support the Archduke as much as I could. But my activities had to be limited more or less to the formal, external, I might say, technical side of his visit. In the important interviews which he had with the Emperor, the Imperial Chancellor, the chief of the General Staff, and others, he was thrown entirely on his own resources and on the instructions he had received

in Vienna and Teschen. I was, therefore, very curious to see how he would acquit himself. And to my great joy and satisfaction I was able to observe that he had succeeded very well. His attitude to the Emperor struck the happy mean between the respect due to an allied Monarch and the natural dignity of his own position. In the course of the considerable time they were together, he must have further strengthened the Emperor Wilhelm's first good impressions. I gather this from a remark of the Imperial Chancellor, who said to me, on his return from Berlin the day after the arrival of the Archduke, that the Emperor had received him with the words: 'To-day you will make the acquaintance of the young Archduke. Mark my words, you will like him very much. Falkenhayn, who had several talks with him lasting some hours, also expressed unreserved appreciation of his sound knowledge of the questions under discussion and of the skill with which he supported the views he was putting forward.' 'Even if we were not always of the same opinion,' he added, 'I hope that we parted friends.' "

Prince Fürstenberg, too, who, as is well known, was a great friend of the Emperor Wilhelm, told me what a good impression the Austrian heir-apparent had made on the Emperor, who had been surprised at the clear and mature political judgment of the young Archduke, and the precise language in which he supported it. Discussion on that occasion was not confined to the Italian demands, but also touched on internal political conditions and questions of a strategical character. The point of view held by the Emperor Franz Joseph with regard to Italy, and put forward by the Archduke Karl at German Headquarters, centred in the idea that to yield to Italy's policy of blackmail would not only be undignified, but also unwise for the moment, and, finally, that Austria could not be expected to be the only one to make great sacrifices, especially by surrendering part of the Tyrol, that is, a part of the national soil which had been heroically defended by its inhabitants.

The Emperor and Burian, despite strong counter-pressure from the German side, stubbornly adhered to their refusal to

make any territorial sacrifices for the moment. Prince Montenuovo repeatedly, but always in vain, urged the Emperor to negotiate with Italy, but held that his representations were in the nature of private conversations, and that it was the business of the responsible Minister to call the Emperor's attention to the dangers that were threatening. It was not until Count Tisza, in an audience on 25th February, 1915, referred to the necessity which had now arisen of entering into negotiations with Italy, that there was any change in the attitude of the Emperor Franz Joseph. Tisza's arguments were further reinforced by confidential diplomatic reports which reached the Emperor a few days later, and which made it clear that Falkenhayn regarded the position of Germany and Austria as hopeless. Our ambassador, Prince Hohenlohe, also reported from Berlin that Hindenburg was at the end of his strength. The Emperor Franz Joseph gave orders for a conference under his chairmanship to be held on 8th March, at which the Archduke Karl, Burian, Tisza, Stürgkh, Krobatin, Koerber, and Conrad were present, with Count Hoyos as secretary. Complete unanimity was reached at the conference. Next day, Baron Burian informed the Italian ambassador, the Duke of Avarna, that Austria-Hungary had decided to accept in principle the cession of the territory demanded by the Italian Government as the basis of discussion in the negotiations on the question of compensation.<sup>1</sup> In the course of the further diplomatic negotiations Burian made an offer to the Duke of Avarna on 27th March, 1915, to surrender the South Tyrol including the Trentino to Italy in return for a promise of benevolent neutrality towards Austria-Hungary and her allies in the political, military, and economic spheres, together with complete freedom of action in the Balkans.

That same day, the Archduke Karl arrived in Vienna from Teschen, and summoned me to accompany him on the return journey to Teschen next day, Palm Sunday, 28th March. During the journey the Archduke spoke at length on the military and political situation. He observed that a declaration of war by Italy could scarcely be avoided, for it was not

<sup>1</sup> Telegram from Baron Burian to Freiherr von Macchio, dated 9th March, 1915.

to be expected that Italy would be content with the Trentino. But no forces were available for a new Front. There was for the moment no prospect of any easing of the situation; in fact, he was firmly convinced that the War would assume even greater dimensions; for if Italy attacked us it was a thousand to one chance that Rumania would soon follow suit.

On 7th April, 1915, Prince Montenuovo, on making his report to His Majesty, returned to the proposal mooted earlier of sending the heir-apparent, the Archduke Karl, to Rome. The Emperor replied that he did not anticipate any success from such a journey, of which, incidentally, the whole town was already talking, since the King of Italy was already benevolently disposed to us and ashamed of the behaviour of his country. The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Baron Burian, in the end peremptorily rejected the proposal to send the Archduke to Rome, whereupon the plan was dropped.<sup>1</sup>

The proposals submitted by the Duke of Avarna on 10th April in the form of an *aide-mémoire* in eleven articles threw light on the promises which had been made to Italy in the event of her entering the War on the side of the Entente. It was impossible to assume that an unconditional acceptance of the Italian demands would have assured permanent neutrality on Italy's part. The demands in any case were such as must be termed impossible of acceptance both by our own and by the German diplomats and statesmen. They made a continuance of the negotiations necessary. With the object of discussing the measures to be taken in case of an Italian attack, the Emperor Franz Joseph ordered a conference for 21st April with Burian, Conrad, and Bolfras. The conference agreed unanimously that, for reasons of prestige, an Italian

<sup>1</sup> I may here mention an episode not devoid of interest, which belongs to this period. On 8th April, 1915, a code telegram was received from the Supreme Command which read as follows: "In extension of the newspaper reports of the English Minister Grey's being on leave for several weeks, it is confidentially stated from a reliable source that Grey has been in Berlin for some days. I request you to get into touch with the Minister for Foreign Affairs immediately in strict confidence." Conrad von Hötzendorf declared that Grey's visit to Berlin was an established fact. Grey had proposed to Germany that England should keep Calais, and Germany should receive the Belgian Congo and evacuate part of Belgium. The proposal was rejected by Germany.

attack on or an occupation of the territory she was demanding must be met by military resistance. Burian wished Conrad to apply to Falkenhayn and demand a precise statement of what attitude Germany would take in the event of an Italian attack. Conrad opposed this request on the ground that it was a matter for the diplomatists, whereupon Burian stated that he was ready "to speak German" with the German Government, and to inform them that we should separate from Germany if they left us in the lurch. Meanwhile, the negotiations with the Entente were still continuing, which came to an end on 25th April, 1915. The die was thus cast against us.

On 2nd May news arrived from Berlin that Italian intervention was imminent. Germany advised us to give way on all points. This was, however, not to be thought of. When, on 4th May, a telegram from the military attaché at Rome was laid before the Emperor which stated that Italy would declare war if all her demands were not agreed to within twenty-four hours, the Emperor Franz Joseph said to Bolfras: "This will be the end of us, I fancy." A few minutes later the Archduke Karl went into the Emperor's room and found him in tears. On 4th May Italy denounced the Triple Alliance. The declaration of war took place on 23rd May. With the break through at Gorlice-Tarnow (2nd to 12th May, 1915), there was, it is true, a slight easing of the military situation, but the tension was still considerable.

The negotiations with Italy greatly aggravated the ill-feeling between Vienna and Berlin, which had been making itself felt for some time. This ill-feeling was afterwards steadily fed by the well-known attitude of the Germans in the military sphere. From a mass of similar incidents, I shall quote only one case, which belongs to this very period and which moved our Ambassador in Berlin to send the following report:

Prince Hohenlohe to Baron Burian.

Berlin, 13th May, 1915.

Yesterday's evening papers published a communication from His Majesty the Emperor Wilhelm to General von Falkenhayn, in which His Imperial Majesty conferred the

Order of the Black Eagle upon the above-mentioned General. The Imperial autograph letter opens with these words: "With a clear and penetrating eye and a correct estimate of the situation, you recognized the point at which the Russian army was most vulnerable, and deduced from this and laid before me the measures necessary for ensuring a great success." I did not neglect, in my interview with the Secretary of State to-day, to draw his attention in a friendly manner to the fact that the words of this letter I have quoted above had affected me most particularly. No one, I said, would dream of depreciating Falkenhayn's services in the present action, but we all knew that it was not the chief of the German General Staff, but rather Baron Conrad, who was not even mentioned in this statement of the German Emperor, who was the author of the plan. The Secretary of State acknowledged the correctness of this, and assured me, in strict confidence, that he could not sufficiently deplore these spontaneous outbursts of the Emperor. The present one was a further instalment of the conferring of the Order *Pour le mérite* on Falkenhayn on account of his services during the winter fighting at the Masurian Lakes, which evoked so much unpleasant comment at the time. (See my report of 30th March last year. No. 26/P A—E.) As I mentioned in that report, relations between Falkenhayn and Hindenburg are extremely strained: Hindenburg's fame gives Falkenhayn no peace, and on the occasion of Your Excellency's last visit to Berlin, as Your Excellency may perhaps remember, I expressed the view that Falkenhayn would without doubt vigorously urge a great offensive in Galicia, so that ultimately a victory would be won without Hindenburg's co-operation. From the way in which Falkenhayn is exploiting this success for that purpose, I gather that my assumption was quite justified.—A part is also played by the fact that the Emperor Wilhelm, in his appreciation of Hindenburg's services, could not quite suppress a certain feeling of jealousy at the really boundless popularity of the Field Marshal, and that he also finds it very welcome to be able to celebrate the victory of a man he appointed to the position of a chief of the General Staff against the advice of many high military

authorities.—I am told that Hindenburg's attempts, made mainly at Ludendorff's instigation, to influence the Emperor against Falkenhayn, merely strengthened the Emperor in his determination to keep him and to single him out for quite special distinction. This desire may explain the wording of the Imperial communication, but it is likely to have as unsympathetic a reception in all circles as the conferment of the Order of Merit on the ambitious and intriguing Chief of the General Staff.

It is also significant that Conrad spoke of the Germans as "our secret enemies."<sup>1</sup> It was the Prussian way to pass over the heroic exploits of our armies in reports, to obscure them by boastful emphasis of the brilliance of their own achievements, or even to refer to them in a contemptuous tone. We Austrians never grudged our former brothers in arms the honour due to their brilliant military successes. But we were bound to demand that they reciprocate, and we could not permit our valiant army to be depreciated at every possible opportunity. Ludendorff's opinion of our army, for example, may be seen from his *Kriegserinnerungen*. On the occasion of the attack on Italy (autumn 1917) he says of the Austrian army: "Its poor fighting power was shown afresh in this campaign." In the course of this wholesale depreciation, Ludendorff says of the Germans: "German leadership and German troops gained fresh glory, and once more proved their superiority in open warfare." Ludendorff writes this in full knowledge of the fact that our army, up to the offensive undertaken in conjunction with the Germans, had successfully defended the frontiers against repeated attacks by superior enemy forces in eleven bloody battles on the Isonzo, with a heroic spirit far surpassing even that of the heroes of old. Ludendorff writes in full knowledge of the fact that in the brilliant victory over the Italian army in the autumn of 1917 our army had far the greater share. Ludendorff dares to

<sup>1</sup> When our delegate to German Great Headquarters, Infantry General Count Josef Stürgkh, came to Teschen on military business in February, 1915, Conrad received him with the words: "Well, what are our secret enemies, the Germans, doing, and what is that play actor, the German Emperor, up to?" (See *Im Deutschen Grossen Hauptquartier*, page 116, by Josef, Count Stürgkh.)



write in this way of the Austrian army, which at the very beginning of the War flung itself against the Russian colossus, and thus checked the advance on Berlin, while the greater part of the German army was suffering, on the Marne, one of the greatest defeats of the War. It was this kind of arrogance on the part of our German allies, to which everyone who co-operated with them, from field marshal down to private, had to submit, that created and nurtured that resentment. It was not surprising that for those whose sentiments were purely Austrian the alliance faded into a merely formally binding tie.

I have thought it necessary to preface this chapter with an account of the negotiations with Italy, because even at that time there was talk of differences of opinion between the Emperor and the heir-apparent, supposed to be connected with the influence of the House of Parma and directed especially towards aggravating the ill-feeling between the allies. No such influence ever existed, and such rumours could only have been invented by people who had no knowledge whatever of conditions at the Court of Vienna. The Emperor and the heir-apparent were entirely at one on the subject of resisting Italy's blackmailing policy. No Austrian thought otherwise, either on the subject of Italy's policy, nor of our ally's neglect of our interests. Moreover, it would be a great mistake to think that the intentions and aspirations of the Emperor Franz Joseph in the matter of the termination of the War differed materially from those of the future Emperor Karl. Shortly before his death, the Emperor Franz Joseph expressed his opinion about the War most decidedly in the following words addressed to the then Minister of National Defence, Freiherr von Georgi: "I'll look on for another three months, and then I'll put an end to it."

## II

When America came into the War in the spring of 1917, after the adoption of the intensified submarine campaign, it was hardly possible to doubt any longer that, if a compromise peace could not be attained, we would finally lose the War.

My official position made me well-informed. The threads of all departments of Government converged in the Emperor's Private Office; all the information, all the reports which reached His Majesty, passed through it. And from all quarters came complaints of universal exhaustion. In all departments there was no possibility of holding out for more than a short time longer: effective fighting population, war material, labour at home, horses, cattle, raw material of all kinds, food supplies and coal were all on the point of exhaustion. Reports of famine and the slow impoverishment of the population were multiplying. News came in of hunger riots, warning heralds of universal despair. Some holes were patched up and others torn open. All this information was borne out by a glance at the scene in the streets, at the unending procession of hungry, frozen, utterly worn out men and women. The resistance of the home population was visibly dwindling. And now a new and terrible enemy appeared on the map—the United States. It could not really be hoped that England would be crushed in a reasonable time by the intensified submarine warfare, as marine transport, though imperilled, was in no way at a standstill. Moreover, the blockade was by no means complete.

To all this was added the desperate condition of internal politics, which were in a state of complete disintegration, as a result of stubborn adherence to false principles, which, emptied of all but the outer shell, the glittering phrase, had long lost all driving force. The non-German and non-Magyar races, whom we had cleverly disgusted out of all interest in the continued existence of the Monarchy and a successful termination of the War, had one foot in enemy country. Among the Czechs and the Southern Slavs, in particular, the belief that they could obtain satisfaction of their national aspirations only outside the Monarchy and only on its ruins, was beginning to gain ground, in proportion as the more moderate elements, who clung to and advocated the possibility of a solution of national questions within the framework of the Monarchy, were being estranged. The influence of our civil administration in this respect had been almost as pernicious as the military courts with their absurd interment measures, suspicions, and political trials.

Field Marshal Conrad seems at that time, the spring of 1917, to have thought that the position could be retrieved by a "push" against Italy. He may perhaps have been right from a strategical standpoint in the opinion that the way to France lay through Italy. But there was no reason to believe that the way to France was also the way to peace—and peace we had to secure; for, if the Central Powers had occupied half France and taken Paris, would that have compelled England and America to make peace, so long as the blockade could be maintained and the transport of American troops was not stopped by the submarines? It was highly improbable that the transport of these troops could be stopped; to count on this was folly. The position in the spring of 1917 was, therefore, such that no reasonable person could any longer dream of a victory of the Central Powers. On the afternoon of the 14th February, 1917, the day after the German Emperor's visit to Vienna, the Emperor Karl said to me: "We shall lose the War, we are bound to lose it, if America comes in. It is a crime against our people to keep them hoping for victory. I have given orders that the press is not always to be trumpeting about victory, but it is no use. The press listens to the German Embassy rather than to us, and carries on worse than before. The military and the Ministers refuse to believe me. How can I work in these conditions?" On my replying that it was certainly not desirable that the enemy should learn how bad our position was, the Emperor replied: "There is no need to say that we are at the end of our strength. But if the people are always being told how splendid things are, they will have no preparation for a peace of surrender. It is not enough that I alone should desire peace. I must have the whole nation and the Ministers firmly on my side."

The Entente was trying to annihilate us in order to weaken the German Empire. This war aim became more obstinately rooted in the enemy's mind in proportion as they recognized that Austria could not be separated from Germany. I know quite well that there were great difficulties in the way of a separation, but it is certain that our mutual assurances of fidelity to the alliance were to our disadvantage from the moment when there was no longer any possibility of our continuing to hold out. All the declarations to this effect

made by the Government and the press took us farther away from the possibility of changing or mitigating the aim of the Entente, the destruction of Austria. All the German propagandist writings, especially Friedrich Naumann's book, *Mitteleuropa*, were also extremely prejudicial to the interests of the Monarchy.<sup>1</sup> The goal to be aimed at was, on the one hand, the attainment of a reasonable peace in the not too distant future, and, on the other hand, the utmost possible mitigation of the war aims of the enemy, so far as our Monarchy was concerned. The preliminary conditions for a reasonable peace seemed to be not unfavourable, at least up to the time when the failure of submarine warfare became obvious (summer of 1917); for desperate as our position was, this was no better known in the enemy countries than it was to many of our own politicians.<sup>2</sup> The enemy ascribed to the strategic advantages on our side greater influence on the position as a whole than they actually possessed. Full advantage should have been taken of this.

The Emperor Karl's efforts to secure peace, with Prince Sixtus of Bourbon as intermediary, began towards the end of the winter of 1916-17. In order to arrive at the original reasons for the choice of Prince Sixtus, we must go back to the summer of 1914, when Prince Sixtus was staying at Schwarzau with his mother, the Duchess of Parma, before starting for a projected tour in the Caucasus. He and his brother Xavier were then, at the time of the outbreak of the War, frequent guests at Schloss Hetzendorf, where the Crown Prince and Princess were in residence.

In the exchange of ideas which arose naturally out of the situation, the political views of the Archduke Karl and his brother-in-law, Prince Sixtus, closely approached each other, although from the day the War broke out they were in opposite camps. Starting from two entirely different standpoints, their opinions met at one point, the belief that an increase in the military power of Prussia was an equal menace to the

<sup>1</sup> The Emperor Franz Joseph, at the time when Naumann was developing his ideas on an economic *rapprochement* between Germany and Austria-Hungary at a meeting in Vienna, said to Helfferich: "There is too much talk on the subject; it's a pity." (Helfferich, *Der Weltkrieg*, vol. iii, page 59.)

<sup>2</sup> See Churchill, *Die Weltkrisis*, vol. ii.

security of France and to the independence of the Hapsburg Empire. Prince Sixtus, as a Frenchman, saw the union of the Monarchy with the German Empire as a strengthening of the hostile power of Prussia, while the Archduke Karl—undoubtedly rightly—was afraid that the German alliance, in the event of a victory of the Central Powers, would be in fact, if not in form, transformed into a vassal relationship of Hapsburg to Hohenzollern, of Austria to Germany, and would lead to the oppression of the non-German races in Austria. Prince Sixtus regarded the preservation and reinforcement of an Austria independent of Germany as one of France's natural interests. The Archduke Karl saw in this interest an advantage which he thought he could make use of to protect the threatened existence and independence of the Empire of which he was the heir.

In the first days of the War this exchange of ideas between the Archduke and the Prince laid the foundations for the peace efforts of the spring of 1917 to this extent that the heir to the Austrian Throne even then recognized that Austria's war aims differed considerably from those of Germany, and that the War must not be waged in order to gain Germany's ends if this involved the sacrifice of Austria's interests.

At the request of the Archduke Karl the Emperor Franz Joseph gave the two Bourbon princes permission to proceed to France by way of Switzerland. They left Schwarzenau on 17th August, 1914. After offering their services first to the French and then to the English army, and having served for a time with the French Red Cross, they were finally given commissions in the Belgian army.

When the Archduke Karl became Emperor, he was engrossed from the very first days of his reign in the endeavour to end the War as soon as possible. He had had no share in its outbreak. He could see no possible advantage for the peoples he ruled in its continuance. He thus regarded it as his moral duty not to allow these peoples any longer to bear the terrible sacrifices which war demanded of them. He wished to make an end of bloodshed. That was the idea which was the motive and is the natural explanation of his every action during the short reign allotted to him.

When considering the first steps towards a general peace,

the Emperor thought of his brother-in-law, Prince Sixtus, whose views were known to him and whom he regarded as the most suitable intermediary in his efforts to end the War. On 5th December, 1916, the Duchess of Parma wrote to her son saying that she would like to see him again; in a letter to the Queen of the Belgians, she asked her and the King to tell her son of this wish. Prince Sixtus and his brother Xavier spent the Christmas Eve of 1916 with the King and Queen and discussed how a meeting with their mother could be arranged. On 23rd January, 1917, they proceeded to Paris, and from there to Neuchâtel, where, on 29th January, they met their mother, who had come there in the strictest incognito with the Princess Maria Antonia. The Duchess told her sons of the Emperor's wish to see them as soon as possible, and to discuss the question of peace with them. Preparations had been made to bring them secretly to Vienna. If they were unable to decide on this step immediately, the Emperor was ready to send a confidential agent to Switzerland to inform them of his intentions. The Duchess also gave the Prince a letter from the Empress, in which she begged her brothers to help the Emperor to realize his desire for peace. Prince Sixtus on this occasion stated that in his view the four fundamental conditions for a peace with the Entente were as follows:

1. The return of Alsace-Lorraine to France without compensation in the form of colonies.
2. Restoration of Belgium.
3. Restoration of Serbia with Albania added to its territory.
4. Surrender of Constantinople to Russia.<sup>1</sup>

On 1st February, 1917, the Princes proceeded to Pianore,

<sup>1</sup> On 12th January, 1917, a Crown Council met from 10 a.m. to 12.30 p.m., at which the Emperor presided and Counts Czernin, Tisza, and Clam, and Freiherrn von Burian and Conrad von Hötzendorf were present. The subject of the conference was the attitude to be adopted to the Polish question and to peace aims. With regard to Poland, it was decided to treat the question in a dilatory fashion and to adjust it to the military situation of the moment when opportunity arose. Provisionally the one goal to be aimed at was the preservation of the integrity of the Monarchy. A desire was unanimously expressed to come to an agreement with Russia and to work for a Three Emperors' Alliance.

and from there to Paris, where they arrived on 10th February. Prince Sixtus had meantime informed the French Government through his confidential agent, Charles Salomon, that the Emperor Karl proposed to get into communication with them through Prince Sixtus, and that he was prepared, if necessary, to send a confidential messenger to Switzerland at very short notice without anyone's knowing anything about it. On 11th February, Prince Sixtus had a conversation on the bases for negotiation with Jules Cambon, recently appointed Secretary General in the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs, at the house of William Martin, who was always in touch with the President of the Republic on account of his position as *directeur du protocole* at the Foreign Office. At the request of Poincaré, communicated through William Martin, Prince Sixtus, accompanied by his brother, returned to Neuchâtel on 12th February. On the afternoon of the following day, the messenger of the Emperor Karl, Count Thomas Erdödy,<sup>1</sup> arrived, accredited with a letter from the Empress. The Count informed the Princes that the Emperor accepted three of the points enumerated by Prince Sixtus as a provisional basis for negotiations on the occasion of his conversation with the Duchess of Parma on 30th January, namely, those relating to France, Belgium, and Russia, but that his views about Serbia differed. His plans provided for the creation of an autonomous Yugoslav Kingdom, embracing Bosnia, Herzegovina, Serbia, Albania, and Montenegro, with an Austrian Archduke at its head, within the framework of the Austrian Monarchy. Prince Sixtus insisted, in obedience to the views of the French Government, on his view about Serbia, the restoration and independence of which and its extension by the inclusion of Albania, with the preservation of the dynasty, he regarded as necessary. There was thus a difference of opinion with regard to Serbia. It

<sup>1</sup> Count Thomas Erdödy, the son of Count Gyula Erdödy, a Geheimrat and a member of the Hungarian Upper House, was born in 1886 and had been a youthful playmate of the Emperor. When the Archduke Otto was stationed in Ödenburg as the colonel and commandant of the 9th Regiment of Hussars (1893-1896), the Archduke Karl was frequently the guest of the parents of Count Thomas Erdödy at their estate of Rotenturm (Vörösvár). The Archduke Karl and Count Thomas, who was a year older, were boys at the time.

seems to me that the Emperor Karl gave the solution of the Serbian question its right place in European politics; the solution planned by him was conceived not only in the interest of Austria but also in that of France: such a decisive step in the direction of the fulfilment of the Greater Austrian mission in the Balkans would both put a spoke in the wheel of Pan-German ambitions and also be more advantageous to Yugoslav interests, economically, through the opening up of a big market free of customs duties, and, politically, as against Italy, on account of the defence which Austria would afford to the newly established Yugoslav State. Moreover Italy, even in the event of a strict adherence to the London Agreement, would have failed to attain its object of destroying the Hapsburg Empire. This, one of the inexplicable points in the policy of the Entente, is explainable only on the assumption of a secret programme, which, in disregard of all the political interests of the individual Entente powers, aimed at the absolute annihilation of the Empire of the Catholic Hapsburgs. Prince Sixtus seems to have received definite directions from the French statesmen, and appears not to have been alive to the fact that insistence on the demand for Serbian independence and the preservation of the dynasty was clear evidence not of regard for national interests, but merely of a preference for dynastic interests<sup>1</sup> which, in republican statesmen, was certainly very remarkable, and that it involved an insincerity and obscurity which seemed to call for caution. The further course of the peace negotiations afforded sufficient grounds for believing that the obvious interests of France were to be subordinated to "higher" interests.

This first interview between Prince Sixtus and the Emperor's secret agent was directly known only to these two themselves, and, on the Austrian side, to the Emperor, the Empress, and the Duchess of Parma,<sup>2</sup> and, on the French side, to Poincaré, Jules Cambon, and William Martin.

Count Erdödy returned to Vienna immediately.

On the day on which this first interview took place (13th

<sup>1</sup> That is, for those of the Karageorgewić.

<sup>2</sup> The Duchess of Parma had no further inkling of the political part of the negotiations. She was merely aware that it was a question of meetings to prepare the way for peace.



February), the Emperor Wilhelm had been in Vienna, and the Emperor Karl had refused, against the wishes of his guest, to break with the United States. On the morning of 16th February, Count Erdödy was received by His Majesty at Baden. Early on 17th February, in the course of an audience which lasted for an hour and a half, Count Czernin, who had been appointed Foreign Minister on 23rd December, 1916, and who up till then had merely known that the Emperor had found a means of negotiating with France, was informed that Prince Sixtus had undertaken the rôle of mediator. Czernin gave his support to the continuance of the Prince's efforts, as is proved by the following letter, dated 17th February, 1917, from Czernin to the Empress:

MOST GRACIOUS LADY,

His Royal and Imperial Apostolic Majesty has commanded me to report daily to Your Majesty on the state of affairs abroad, a command which I shall proceed to carry out as from to-morrow.<sup>1</sup>

After full consideration of Your Majesty's arguments at my audience to-day, I consider it of the greatest importance that Prince Sixtus should himself come to Your Majesty.

If Your Majesty could speak with him personally, our cause would be appreciably advanced.

I learn from a reliable source that the Caillaux Ministry is appearing on the horizon. It would be a "peace ministry"; perhaps the two matters are connected.<sup>2</sup>

I kiss Your Majesty's hands and remain,

Your Majesty's most humble and devoted  
servant,  
CZERNIN.

<sup>1</sup> The events that led up to the Emperor's order were as follows: The Emperor had asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs to enlighten the Empress on the political situation from time to time, when she had to receive a political personage, so that she might be able to carry on the conversation in our interests. Czernin proposed to report regularly to the Empress. At first the Emperor declined to have regular reports made, because he did not wish people to think that the Empress was personally interested in political affairs, but finally he accepted the suggestion of Czernin, who found nothing objectionable in the practice.

<sup>2</sup> This shows that Count Czernin knew of the negotiations already in progress.

On the 19th of February, Erdödy received instructions from Czernin for his next journey to Switzerland, and also written guiding lines<sup>1</sup> for the further negotiations to be carried on through the intermediacy of Prince Sixtus. These guiding lines appeared to the Emperor to form an insufficient basis for negotiations. He supplemented them by notes<sup>2</sup> in his own handwriting, which he gave to Count Erdödy on 19th February, 1917.<sup>3</sup> Erdödy left Vienna that evening and arrived on the 21st at Neuchâtel, where Prince Sixtus was awaiting him. He informed the Prince that the Emperor had told Count Czernin of the basis of negotiations and of Prince Sixtus's part as mediator, and that Count Czernin associated himself with the Emperor's request that Prince Sixtus should come to Vienna as soon as possible in order to advance the negotiations. Erdödy handed over to the Prince Czernin's guiding lines and also the Emperor's notes.

On 5th March Prince Sixtus was received by the President of the French Republic, and submitted the above-mentioned documents to him. With regard to Count Czernin's guiding lines, Poincaré remarked: "*Cette note est tout à fait insuffisante. Elle ne peut même pas être un minimum. Il me serait impossible de la montrer à nos alliés.*" Of the Emperor's notes, he said: "*La note secrète donne une base que la note ouverte ne donne absolument pas.*" He undertook to communicate the two notes to the Prime Minister, and, by letter, to the Tsar, the King of England, and also Lloyd George, who was perfectly discreet, but said that, in his view, Italy would be the stumbling-block. She would make considerable demands, and it was impossible for France to conclude a separate peace with Austria without Italy. France, he continued, had not guaranteed Trieste to her Italian ally, but merely promised to help her to conquer it; France might discuss with Austria, but the alliance was a synallagmatic contract which prohibited France from concluding a separate peace. He was also apprehensive of an indiscretion towards Germany on Italy's part. The course to be followed was to abide by Austria's four main undertakings,<sup>4</sup> to communicate

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix V.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix VI.

<sup>3</sup> Count Erdödy was twice received in audience on 19th February, 1917.

<sup>4</sup> These are the four conditions indicated by Prince Sixtus as the basis of agreement and enumerated on page 225.

this result in strict confidence to England and Russia, and to find ways and means for concluding a secret armistice. Russia was waging war only on account of Constantinople; neither England nor France wanted anything from Austria. It was France's interest not only to preserve Austria, but even to extend it at the expense of Germany (by the inclusion of Silesia or Bavaria).

On 8th March, 1917, Prince Sixtus was again received by Poincaré, who informed him that Briand, the Prime Minister, like himself, was of opinion that the four above-specified points were the *conditio sine qua non* with regard to Austria. If a formal undertaking with regard to these four points were submitted, he and Briand would communicate it to the King of England and the Tsar. In order to inform the Emperor Karl of the position, Prince Sixtus wrote a letter on 16th March, which he intended to forward to his brother-in-law through Erdödy. In this letter<sup>1</sup> he told the Emperor that, in order to arrive at any result, it was absolutely necessary that he (the Emperor) should send him a written communication in which he definitely (*d'une manière précise et sans ambiguïté*) undertook to observe the four points. He added: "*Je me permets de joindre un brouillon.*"<sup>2</sup> *Je te prie instamment de te tenir aussi près que possible de ce brouillon.*"

The Princes Sixtus and Xavier came to Geneva on 19th March. That same evening Count Erdödy also arrived there; he had received the necessary instructions from the Emperor Karl at Laxenburg on the afternoon of 15th March, and informed the Princes of the urgent request of the Emperor and Empress that they should come to Vienna, in order to advance the cause of peace. In a letter brought by Count Erdödy the Empress wrote as follows to her brother Sixtus: "*Ne te laisse pas arrêter par des considérations qui, dans la vie courante, seraient justifiées. Pense à tous ces malheureux qui vivent dans l'enfer des tranchées, qui y meurent par centaines tous les jours et viens.*"

The following night (20th March) the Princes set out accompanied by Count Erdödy. They proceeded through Liechtenstein to Feldkirch. The frontier officials had been instructed to afford the travellers every assistance. For the

See Appendix VII.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix VIII.

journey from Feldkirch to St. Anton vor dem Arlberg a motor-car was used; after that they took the train. The Princes travelled with official passports made out in assumed names. They arrived in Vienna on the evening of 22nd March, and put up at Count Erdödy's house in the Landskrongasse. Erdödy proceeded to Laxenburg that night to give the Emperor the letter written by Prince Sixtus in Paris on 16th March. On 23rd March Count Erdödy was again received by the Emperor in an audience which lasted half an hour, and on the evening of this same day, the Princes drove to Laxenburg with Count Erdödy. The car stopped in a courtyard at some distance from the main buildings, where the Captain of the Public Guards received the Princes and conducted them to the chief entrance. After giving the password, they passed the guards, and, entering the building through a door in the garden, they reached a stairway which led directly to the Imperial private apartments. The Captain and Count Erdödy remained behind to guard the staircase and the ante-room, while the Princes went into the Empress's drawing-room, where the Imperial couple awaited them. Prince Sixtus, in his book, *L'offre de paix séparée de l'Autriche*, describes the conversation which ensued as follows. The Emperor opened the conversation with the words: "Peace absolutely must be concluded. I will have peace at any price." He went on to observe that at present a certain equilibrium of forces prevailed. If the War were continued it might indeed be possible for one of the belligerents to gain a complete victory and annihilate his opponents, but at what cost? Moreover, great victories did not result in the best peace treaties.

The Prince then developed his views on the lines of his above-mentioned letter. In the discussion on the attitude of the Germans, the Emperor Karl said that he had already tried every expedient with regard to them, but that not a thought of peace existed in influential circles in Germany. The dogma of a "victorious peace" was unshakable in Germany; but his duty as Germany's ally made it imperative for him to try every means and to persuade the Germans to conclude a just peace. If this failed, he would make a separate peace, as he could not sacrifice Austria to the madness of her neighbour. The Germans, however, all seemed to be hypnotized. At the moment

the important thing was to arrive at complete agreement, with France, in particular, and, through France, with England and Russia, in such a way that, if the Germans stubbornly refused to hear of such a peace, Austria could say to them: "We can no longer fight for the King of Prussia; we will make the necessary sacrifices and sign the peace immediately." The Emperor vigorously emphasized his duty towards Germany as her ally, which could not cease until Austria had definitely put to Germany the question whether she was prepared to negotiate in a reasonable spirit, and until Germany had categorically refused to do so.

The Emperor then discussed with the Prince the various questions to be solved, beginning with Alsace-Lorraine, and going on to the Polish question, the rehabilitation of Serbia and Belgium, the attitude to be taken towards Rumania, and lastly and most difficult, the question of Italy. Even on that occasion Prince Sixtus expressed his apprehension that the whole business might be wrecked on this last question. The Emperor observed that no result would be reached if an attempt were made to deal directly with the Italians. The important thing was that France, England, and Russia should decide to make peace with Austria; then they could come together to discuss the Italian demands and endeavour to satisfy them. Regard would have to be paid to public opinion and the just desires of the Austrian population. He spoke enthusiastically of the successes in the Italian theatre of War, of the successes of his good Tyroleans, who had checked the whole Italian army with a few battalions at Friaul.

Count Czernin then appeared. Prince Sixtus describes him: "*Long, maigre et froid, en redingote . . . la conversation est passablement glaciale malgré le désir évident de l'empereur de la mettre sur un ton plus chaud. Le prince trouve, chez le comte Czernin, des réticences et, surtout, une façon de s'exprimer tellement floue qu'il est impossible de saisir le fond de sa pensée. Machiavel est, certainement, désapprouvé sa façon de parler, car, en bluffant, il bluffe mal.*" According to Prince Sixtus's description, the conversation seems not to have followed any definite course. In reply to a remark of the Prince that one could not have peace without sacrifices, Czernin said that he could only speak of the present War map, that we

certainly must make peace and would make the necessary sacrifices, but that it was difficult to be definite. One thing he could say with certainty, a good peace would be accepted at once. With regard to the Germans, we should certainly have to separate from them one day, as he did not believe that they would ever give up Alsace-Lorraine. The Prince tried to secure clear instructions. The Emperor consulted with Czernin, and then turned to the Prince and said: "I will let you have them to-morrow evening." Count Czernin then rose and the Emperor accompanied him to the end of the drawing-room, while the Princes moved into an adjoining room with the Empress. When the Emperor rejoined them, he said to Prince Sixtus that Czernin would call on him to-morrow at Count Erdödy's house. He then asked the Prince to come back to Laxenburg next day at the same time. The Emperor showed his dissatisfaction that the interview had not taken the course he wished. He must, he said, see that this suspicious attitude gave way to greater cordiality next day. The Princes left the Schloss a few minutes before eleven p.m. The Emperor's conversation with Prince Sixtus had begun at eight o'clock; Czernin had been present from 9.30 to 10.45.

Next day, 24th March, Czernin went to Erdödy's house to see Prince Sixtus. According to the Prince's account the results of the conversation were not brilliant: to give the impression of being willing to take the first step towards peace seemed to mean to Count Czernin the sum total of sacrifice. In his view everyone should take this first step simultaneously. In speaking of the Germans his language became more definite. He declared that the alliance would cease to exist on the day that Germany hindered the conclusion of a reasonable peace for Austria.

On the evening of this same day (24th March), the Princes again went to Laxenburg, where the Emperor gave his brother-in-law, Sixtus, a letter addressed to him which contained the desired definite declarations. This was the so-called "first Imperial letter."<sup>1</sup> The Prince thanked the Emperor and promised to observe the strictest secrecy. Poincaré would also enjoin secrecy on the few persons to whom he had confided the affair.

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix IX.

In view of the fact that we have only a one-sided account of the conversations and negotiations between the Emperor, Prince Sixtus, and Count Czernin, it may be doubted whether they took exactly this form. But from a knowledge of the position and the characters of the participants, I think, however, that there is no reason to doubt the correctness of the account. The decisive fact of the participation of the director of our foreign policy in the negotiations is not in doubt. Nevertheless, it seems to me that one not unimportant incident, and one which might have required lengthy consideration, is passed over in silence: I mean the composition of the letter. That the letter as we have it now was a first draft seems to me very improbable, for the text shows not inconsiderable deviations from that of the document (*projet de note*) which Prince Sixtus wished to be made the basis of the desired definite declarations, and from which the chief points, textually in part, were transferred to the letter. The assumption that Prince Sixtus was the sole author of the letter seems to be incorrect on account of these very deviations. In this case the letter would have been worded differently, for the Emperor's point of view, as expressed in this letter, is not identical in all respects with that of his brother-in-law, and may have been subjected to further revision at the consultation with Count Czernin. That the Emperor Karl was the sole author of the letter I consider impossible, for the manner of writing is too different from the Emperor's natural style. That the Empress assisted him is possible, but this assumption does not cover everything, since the diction of the letter betrays a skill in specifically political methods of expression which I do not believe the Empress possessed. It seems to be beyond doubt that the letter was the result of exhaustive discussions and of various drafts composed in co-operation, in which Prince Sixtus took part.

Meanwhile, Count Czernin had informed the German Federal Chancellor that he "expected to have an opportunity for a not unpromising peace conference with France." Bethmann Hollweg came to Vienna, where he had an interview with Count Czernin on the morning of the 16th March, 1917. On the afternoon of the same day, a conference took place at which, in addition to Czernin and Bethmann, the German

Ambassador, Count Wedel, the Austrian Ambassador at Berlin, Prince Hohenlohe, Ambassador von Merey, and Stumm, the head of the Political Section of the Foreign Office in Berlin, were present. At this conference Count Czernin proposed to send the ex-Ambassador at London, Count Mensdorff, to Switzerland, under the cloak of a journey of investigation for the Red Cross, in order that he could have an interview with the French agent without attracting attention. As a guide to him in the conduct of this interview it was necessary that a minimum and maximum programme of German peace conditions should be disclosed. The result of the conference was that Bethmann Hollweg agreed to a negotiator's being sent to Switzerland on the following conditions:

1. The attitude of the negotiator should be receptive.
2. He should allow it to appear between the lines that an agreement between France and Germany would be possible on the basis (a) of a territorial exchange in Europe; (b) a general Colonial settlement; (c) economic compensation.
3. The confidential agent must ask what would be the attitude of England to such an arrangement.

Bethmann Hollweg gave as Germany's minimum demand to France the exchange of the ore deposits of Briey-Longwy for parts of Lorraine and Alsace, and as her maximum demand, the acquiring of these ore deposits without territorial concessions.

It is not quite clear what was Count Czernin's purpose in this mission. We are driven back on conjectures, but we shall not be far wrong in assuming that his object was to divert Germany's attention from the real mediator, Prince Sixtus. This must at least have been the reason given to the Emperor for Count Mensdorff's mission. It is, however, not improbable that Czernin had also a subsidiary object, to entrust the peace negotiations to a professional diplomatist, dependent on and subordinate to himself, which was very natural from his point of view, that of the responsible Minister. Finally, Count Czernin might also have been glad to be able to some extent at least to control the conduct of the Bourbon prince through an agent subordinate to himself.



What passed between Czernin and Bethmann Hollweg on the morning of the 16th March, 1917, is unknown. But that important matters were discussed on that occasion is shown by the following facts. A few days after Bethmann's visit to Vienna, I had business at Baden with the head of the Military Chancery, Freiherr von Marterer. A series of complaints, petitions, and memoranda had been sent to me which it was the business of the Military Chancery to deal with. I handed them over to Marterer, who told me that he received a mass of similar communications every day, which was a sign of our increasingly hopeless position. I observed that they were the heralds of the revolution which was yeasting up: in all these documents, piles of which reached me also, were to be read the clear signs of resentment restrained with difficulty and incipient despair. It was not desirable to pursue the War until the population was reduced to destitution. Marterer remarked that the Emperor was making zealous efforts to bring about a peace. Bethmann's visit was connected with this. The Emperor had told him that Bethmann had been informed in the most decided terms that we would in any event make an end in the autumn, and that Germany would have to give up part of Alsace. On the evening of 17th March, after the luncheon at Laxenburg, Bethmann had had a breakdown at Count Czernin's.<sup>1</sup>

On the 22nd of March a Crown Council took place at Laxenburg, at which the Emperor presided and Count Czernin, Count Tisza, Count Clam, Freiherr von Burian, the Minister of War, the Chief of the General Staff, and the head of the Military Chancery were present. The object of the Crown Council was to decide the lines on which Czernin should negotiate with the German Government in Berlin on the peace conditions to be aimed at. The Ministers were unanimous that Germany should be compensated for territorial losses in the west (Alsace-Lorraine) by the transfer of Poland. In return for our giving up Poland, an indemnification of the Monarchy by the incorporation of the occupied parts of Rumania<sup>2</sup> must be kept in view. Tisza, whose

<sup>1</sup> Marterer refers to this in his diary.

<sup>2</sup> Czernin described Rumania as a "Milliarden-Objekt." The idea of annexing Rumania originated with him.

attention had been called to this eventuality on 18th March, and who, therefore, was prepared, demanded that it should be declared in advance that Rumania would fall not to Austria but entirely to Hungary. The matter would be arranged there on Hungarian lines.<sup>1</sup> Clam was in favour of the annexation of parts of Serbia, as it would not do for Hungary alone to receive an accession of territory. Tisza expressed himself in very decided terms against any incorporation of Yugoslav areas, as this would mean the adoption into the Monarchy of radical and dangerous elements. The Emperor put an end to the ensuing debate, which had no practical value and which was threatening to get out of hand, by declaring that no decision would be come to to-day with regard to the constitutional organization of occupied areas, whereupon a resolution was passed to defer the more detailed consideration of the question to a later date.

The Vienna negotiations were followed, on 27th March, by a conference at Berlin, at which were present, in addition to Czernin and Bethmann, Secretary of State Zimmermann, Stumm, the head of the Political Section of the German Foreign Office and Prince Hohenlohe. It was obviously important that Czernin should bring Bethmann slowly and gradually, at least on some points, to the view which Prince Sixtus had described as the *conditio sine qua non* of negotiations with the Entente, and which the Emperor Karl, in his letter to the Prince, had promised to put before his allies. The tenor of the negotiations, known through disclosures in the *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten* (March 1922), shows that Czernin was acquainted with the points dealt with in the Emperor's letter. He brought forward the restoration of Serbia to full sovereign rights, compensation to Serbia in the form of an outlet to the sea (for areas to be ceded to Bulgaria), the cession of, it is true, only a part of Alsace, and the restoration of Belgium.<sup>2</sup> Czernin was also in entire agreement with the contents of the Emperor's letter in mentioning a separate Italian peace offer,<sup>3</sup> but leaving Italy otherwise out of the

<sup>1</sup> Tisza, it may be said, was not in favour of the annexation of all the occupied parts of Rumania. Thus he spoke against the incorporation of Bucharest.

<sup>2</sup> I do not of course mean that Czernin knew about the letter.

<sup>3</sup> See pages 251 *et seq.*

discussion and even declaring that territorial concessions to Italy were out of the question. Of what passed between Czernin and Bethmann unofficially, we have no definite information. But one statement of Count Czernin's, of great importance for the question, is available; it is contained in a memorandum submitted by Czernin to the Emperor at this very period (end of March or beginning of April).<sup>1</sup> It dealt with our war aims, principally with the Polish question and the plan of "selling" Poland to Germany, at the price of a partial cession of Alsace-Lorraine to France, while we were to be compensated with Rumania. This is the plan which was made the basis of the Homburg negotiations. Czernin's memorandum contains the following passage: "If Germany gives up France and Belgium and something besides, peace is already won. The Federal Chancellor promised me this sacrifice in strict confidence." Since I have read the account of the negotiations of 16th and 27th March, 1917, and learned the main points of the Homburg negotiations, I am no longer able to believe entirely in this alleged promise of Bethmann's. But thus much is certain: Count Czernin officially communicated such a promise to the Emperor, and the Emperor's faith was thereby strengthened. He believed himself to be completely justified in letting the Entente know, with the object of attaining a separate peace offer, that he would work vigorously to persuade his allies to a sacrifice which the responsible leader of Germany's foreign policy had already promised, at least partially, to accept.

On 31st March Prince Sixtus delivered the Emperor Karl's letter to the President of the French Republic. Ribot, who had become Prime Minister in the interval, proceeded at once to Lloyd George at Folkestone to communicate the Emperor's letter to him. Ribot, in his *Lettres à un ami*, tells how Lloyd George, on receiving the news, even before he had read the letter, cried: "*C'est la paix*." In fact, so far as England and France were concerned, there was no longer any obstacle to the opening of peace negotiations.

<sup>1</sup> The Emperor Karl handed the memorandum to me to keep along with other papers, when he was tidying up his desk on Easter Sunday, 8th April, 1917. It was placed in the secret archives of the Private Office. My recollection, however, is, I believe, of a considerably shorter version of the memorandum than that published by Karl Friedrich Nowak in his book, *Der Sturz der Mittelmächte*.

The first check arose from the way in which Ribot, in strong contrast to Aristide Briand, handled the affair. He was from the very outset, cautious, distrustful, and dilatory. It almost seems as if he preferred other interests to the obvious advantage of France. Are we to think that the definite intervention of a Bourbon prince in the destiny of France went against the grain, or the introduction of a favourable turn of any kind in European politics through direct dynastic influences, as was the case here? The truth is that Ribot, when he learned of the successful journey of Prince Sixtus to Laxenburg, at the beginning plainly evaded any interview with the Prince, in spite of the intervention of influential persons, that he opposed the intention of the Prince, which had the support of Poincaré, personally to inform King George V of the Emperor Karl's offer,<sup>1</sup> and that he—a point of decisive importance—was the first stubbornly to put forward the view that Sonnino must first be informed of the Emperor's step and be given an opportunity to voice Italy's demands. Cambon, on the other hand, who quite rightly feared an indiscretion with regard to Germany, adhered to the opinion of the Emperor and Prince Sixtus, that the four points could form the basis for negotiations, and that the question of Serbia, Italy, and Rumania should be discussed after that.<sup>2</sup> Ribot's view deprived the peace efforts of all prospect of success. Sonnino, whom Ribot enlightened on all the details of the peace proposals in July, 1917, may well himself have wondered at this attitude, for no such claim could be made by an Italy which had never allowed itself to be diverted by any considerations for its allies, which during the whole war had been in the pocket of the Entente, which could not point to even the smallest military success, and which, as the Emperor Karl once expressed it, was not even capable of giving a proper stab in the back. Prince Sixtus wished the fact that the Emperor Karl had personally undertaken the step towards *rapprochement* to be kept absolutely secret from Sonnino because of possible indiscretions, while Ribot at first insisted that Sonnino should have all the facts

<sup>1</sup> Prince Sixtus personally informed the King of England of the Emperor Karl's peace efforts at a later date.

<sup>2</sup> Prince Sixtus of Bourbon, *Offre, etc.*, page 113.

of the case explained to him immediately. It was not until Poincaré, Jules Cambon, and Paul Cambon intervened, and supported Prince Sixtus's opinion, that Ribot abandoned his point of view and adapted himself reluctantly to the views of Prince Sixtus.

In accordance with his intention expressed on 24th March, 1917,<sup>1</sup> the Emperor Karl now set about the attempt to persuade the Emperor Wilhelm and the leading German statesmen and generals to conclude a peace based on the surrender of Alsace-Lorraine. For this purpose he, accompanied by Czernin and Arz, paid a visit to his ally.

A journey to Transylvania had been planned for the 31st of March by the Emperor. The first preparations for it had been made by the 28th, when, on the evening of that day, the Emperor gave counter orders to the effect that the journey would not take place. Count Czernin had returned from Berlin. Next day (29th March) the Emperor sent a code telegram to the Emperor Wilhelm saying that he desired to come to Homburg on 3rd April to be introduced to Her Majesty the Empress of Germany. As, however, he had also important political matters to discuss, he would bring Czernin with him, and proposed that there should be an interview between the Foreign Ministers of the two countries in the presence of their rulers.

The Emperor Wilhelm could not understand the reason for the Emperor Karl's visit. The then Austrian military plenipotentiary at German Great Headquarters, Field Marshal Lieutenant von Klepsch-Kloth, was questioned on the point by the Emperor Wilhelm the day before the Emperor Karl's arrival, but he could give no explanation. Prince Gottfried Hohenlohe appears to have been the first to make a suggestion on the subject to the Emperor.

The Emperor and Empress started on 2nd April for German Headquarters, then situated at Homburg. The Court train left Laxenburg at 2 p.m. At the start of the journey Count Czernin brought His Majesty the news that Italy had made a peace offer: but she demanded the South Tyrol, which Czernin said could not even be considered. The Em-

<sup>1</sup> Conversation between the Emperor Karl and Prince Sixtus at Laxenburg. See page 232.

peror told me this when I made my evening report that day, observing that it seemed that the peace parties in the enemy countries were gaining ground. This was the first important Imperial journey in which I took part. The Masters of the Households of the Emperor and Empress, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the adjutant general and aides-de-camp, the Chief of the General Staff, the heads of the Military Chancery and the Private Office, ladies-in-waiting and officials were included in the suite. It was an enormously long train made up of a series of saloon coaches. The Emperor and Empress's coach was in the middle. A " Marshal's Table " was in the dining-car. The whole train was very animated. The Chief of the General Staff, with his military operations office, was installed in one of the carriages, and the officers of the General Staff worked there. In another carriage, the Military Chancery and the Private Office were established. At the end of the train was the telegraph coach, with telegraphic and Hughes apparatus and the telephone box. The Director of Court Travelling had his office, the Court kitchens their carriage. In the train official business was carried on, and audiences and conferences took place. In the Emperor's coach His Majesty's aide-de-camp sat in one compartment and announced the names of the gentlemen summoned to audience. These audiences generally lasted longer than usual. The Emperor had time and nothing to distract him. At the stations at which the train stopped, the Emperor usually got out, and, after receiving the reports of the station commandant and the civil officials who had come to the station, walked up and down the platform with one or other of the gentlemen of his suite.

When the train drew into Homburg station, punctual to a second, at nine o'clock the next day, the German Emperor and Empress with their suite were there to meet the Austrian Imperial couple. The Emperor Karl presented the gentlemen of his suite to the Emperor Wilhelm at the station, and the latter exchanged a few words with each of us. Then we drove to the Schloss in a long string of carriages. On our arrival there a reception and presentations took place in the Empress's drawing-rooms. After that we were conducted to the apartments allotted to us. Discussions and interviews

began. As I had nothing to do with these, I took a walk through the former capital of the Landgrave of Hesse—Homburg, so rich in historical memories.

We assembled for the "Marshal's Table" in a large hall, where mutual presentations of honours were made. I was introduced to Bethmann Hollweg, Hindenburg, and Ludendorff. Hindenburg impressed me as a faithful, honourable, and honest soldier of the old school, a man of iron. Ludendorff seemed more modern, hard as steel, repellent, unpleasantly vigorous in conversation, hard, stubborn, and opinionated. I had a long talk with Valentini, the head of the Civil Cabinet; I sat by him at table, and learned a great deal from him. He impressed me as a shrewd statesman, who did not make a parade of his personality and influence. He resigned his post in 1917 at the instigation of the Supreme Army Command.

After the meal Count Czernin had a longish interview with Ludendorff, of which Ludendorff gives a detailed account in his *Kriegserinnerungen*. If this account is correct, the conversation, which was moreover not official, shows that they did not get beyond establishing the fact that they were not of the same mind.

In the afternoon we drove to the Saalburg, a Roman fortress near Homburg, which the Emperor Wilhelm had had reconstructed. He explained it to his guests on this occasion in detail like an expert on the subject, showing a wealth of knowledge and high intellectual culture in a manner which had in it nothing affected or adventitious, but something truly royal. As the Emperor Wilhelm, on the site of that old Roman camp, unrolled a page of ancient history to our gaze, the effect was very different from the lecture of a professor whose connection with the events described is purely intellectual. History must have meant much more than a science to the German Emperor. His mastery of it was different, because, as Emperor he played an important part in it. He presented some of his guests, among them Prince Konrad Hohenlohe, with reproductions of an old Roman black staff. Hohenlohe declared, during a few minutes' conversation I had with him later, that the Emperor had made a mistake in the colours by giving him a black staff

and the Order of the Red Eagle. The higher order, that of the Black Eagle, would have been more suitable to his position. Official negotiations began after our return from the Saalburg.

At half-past four the Emperor Karl received Hindenburg, then Ludendorff, and finally Count Czernin. A short conference then took place between Bethmann Hollweg, Czernin, Hindenburg, Ludendorff, and Erz. After Ludendorff's speech, Czernin proposed that: "In order to bring about peace in the near future, Germany should give Alsace-Lorraine to France. Austria-Hungary would unite Galicia to Poland, and support the annexation of Poland by Germany." The discussion, which had lasted about ten minutes, was suddenly broken off. The Federal Chancellor and Count Czernin were summoned to the two Emperors.<sup>1</sup> On the subject of the conference between the Emperor Wilhelm and the Emperor Karl to which Czernin and Bethmann Hollweg were summoned, Bethmann makes the following statement in his *Betrachtungen zum Weltkrieg*: "I was amazed, however, when Count Czernin proposed on 3rd April, on the occasion of the Emperor Karl's visit to Homburg, that we should entirely surrender Alsace-Lorraine, in exchange for the reversion of Poland including Galicia. This reversion was valueless, and no express declaration was necessary of the fact that the voluntary surrender of the whole Reichsland was unacceptable to us." At 6.30 p.m. we all dined together, and the usual toasts were given by the two Emperors. Another reception took place before our departure. Their Majesties said good-bye to each other at the station.

I was sent for to report that same evening. The Emperor told me to draft a telegram to the Emperor Wilhelm, to be sent off as we left the German frontier. He merely spoke of the external circumstances of the visit, and did not touch at all on the tenor and result of the negotiations. The atmosphere of the train was very subdued. There could be no doubt that we had met with a rebuff.

The only asset—a somewhat miserable one at that—resulting from the meeting of the Emperors at Homburg, was that, after the proposal for compensating Germany for the

<sup>1</sup> This discussion took place between 5.30 and 6.30 p.m.



loss of Alsace-Lorraine by the acquisition of Poland had been shown to be outside discussion, the Emperor Karl returned to the Austro-Polish solution, discussed with the Emperor Wilhelm the candidature for the throne of the Archduke Carl Stephan, and obtained from him a promise on the subject. Nevertheless, the first warning had been given.

The Emperor Karl made a second attempt to persuade our ally to compliance by sending to the German Emperor the well-known memorandum of 12th April, which he had composed in conjunction with Count Czernin. The intention of the memorandum was to inform the Emperor of our position, to break down the "victory peace" spirit, and to secure in any event freedom of negotiation for Austria. The composition of this memorandum may also have been intended to provide a written document which could be referred to in case Austria went her own way. The memorandum pointed out that our military strength was approaching its end, and further drew attention to the exhaustion of our raw materials for the manufacture of munitions, the total lack of new supplies of men, and to the sullen despair which had taken possession of all sections of the population on account of under-feeding, and which made it impossible to go on enduring the sufferings entailed by the War. "An end must be made at any cost in the late summer." Czernin also drew attention in the memorandum to the danger of revolution. He stated that he did not believe that the internal situation in Germany was appreciably different from that of Austria; only he was afraid that military circles in Berlin were given up to certain illusions. He was immovably convinced that if Germany should try to carry on another winter campaign, there would be revolutionary disturbances at home. He drew attention to the exacerbation of the situation brought about by the entry of the United States into the War. He considered the hopes which Germany set on submarine warfare to be illusory, etc. It would be a great mistake to think that circumstances had been deliberately painted in this report in darker colours than was justified by reality. As head of the Emperor's private office I had had the opportunity of obtaining an insight into things which were deliberately kept concealed from the public, and I can testify that the memorandum was no

exaggeration but a completely faithful picture of a hopeless situation.

The aide-de-camp, Count Ledochowski, who had been sent to Kreuznach to deliver the memorandum, handed it over to the German Emperor on the morning of 13th April, 1917, in a sealed envelope with an accompanying letter from the Emperor Karl. Ledochowski learned the contents of the Imperial message, of which he had been in ignorance, from the remarks of the guests at dinner. The memorandum was already known to the suite of the German Emperor. No one credited this gloomy picture of the situation.

How little importance the Emperor Wilhelm attached to the memorandum is shown by the letter which he wrote as a provisional answer, and of which the text was as follows:

Kreuznach,  
14th April, 1917.

MY DEAR CARL,

Many thanks for your *promemoria*, which I shall study and examine very carefully. After consultation with my responsible advisers, I shall communicate my reply to you. The results of our submarine warfare for March are splendid: 861,000 tons of commercial shipping have been reported as sunk up to date. This includes a week of inactivity owing to continuous storms. The final results will not be known until the end of the month, but they will be even higher. To these should be added the losses due to mines, which amount on the average, calculated over a considerable period, to about 100,000 tons a month. We thus arrive at about a million tons for March. The Navy at the beginning of the submarine warfare pledged itself to account for from 500,000 to 600,000 tons a month. The effects of this are already making themselves seriously felt in London, where all public hotels and restaurants have been given exact directions about quantities and serving customers in turn. Potatoes are not to be had for love or money. There is no doubt that England will soon be obliged to ration herself like a beleaguered fortress. One great English newspaper yesterday mentioned the word "famine" for the first time in connection with England.

The situation is aggravated by the announcement by the United States Minister for Agriculture of the failure of the winter crops, involving a loss of 450 million bushels of wheat, 225 million bushels less than the normal average quantity. Thus the United States will in all probability be unable to do anything. The situation in Canada is probably similar. The Argentine has prohibited exports. There remains only Australia, and from there a ship requires about three months there and back to bring the harvest. The first consignments of wheat from Australia have already, according to reports received, been sunk by our submarines before Alexandria. Since 1st January, 1917, 3,100,000 tons have been sunk.

In Russia time and the extremists are working for us. The numerous conversations between the troops in the trenches show that the Russian army will undertake no further offensive, but merely act on the defensive; in fact, it is unable to do anything further. I have instructed the Eastern High Command to make no more attacks, to leave the Russians in peace, especially not to disturb them at Easter. The troops are abandoning the Front in crowds for home, in order to have a share in the land looting. We provide the patrols with newspapers and documents of all kinds, which are being distributed out there, in order that our peaceful intentions may be known, with great success. Time is working for us there: Miliukov will have to make peace in spite of all his fine words; otherwise he'll be turned out. His opponents are determined to have peace, so in one way or another the Russians will come to us and then matters will soon be arranged with them without difficulty. It can't last much longer, as there too famine is advancing.

Good-bye. A thousand greetings from the Empress.

Your true friend,

WILHELM.

Thus lightly did the Emperor Wilhelm treat the Emperor Karl's most sincere efforts to secure peace. Under the influence of his "victory peace" generals, the success of the submarine warfare seemed to have clouded the German Em-

peror's usually clear vision. His reply seems to me to ignore the very points to which the Emperor Karl attached the greatest importance.

The object of the Emperor's journey to Homburg was quite wrongly interpreted in Paris, a fact which to some extent diminished confidence in his clear intentions, and had an unfavourable influence on the temper of the small circle initiated into his peace movement. On 19th April a meeting took place at Saint-Jean-de-Maurienne between Lloyd George, Ribot, and Sonnino, at which the last declared that the war aims laid down in the London Protocol were minimum aims. Jules Cambon, in his capacity as Secretary General of the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs, then handed Prince Sixtus, on 22nd April, a reply rejecting the Emperor Karl's peace offer. The reason given was that in the proposals which had reached the French Government Italy's claims had been passed over in silence; the negotiations at Saint-Jean-de-Maurienne had, however, shown that the Italian Government had no intention of dropping even one of the conditions she had laid down at the time of her entry into the War.

Prince Sixtus then informed the Emperor Karl of the position of affairs in a letter dated 22nd April, 1917, expressing the view that the result hitherto attained, however, meant a decided step towards peace. He gave this letter to Erdödy, whom he met at Zug on 25th April, and instructed him to persuade the Emperor to open peace negotiations with Italy through the medium of the Entente. America's entry into the War, he said, made peace even more urgently necessary for Austria than had been the case a month ago. Lloyd George personally believed that Italy would ultimately be satisfied with the Italian part of the South Tyrol and a few Dalmatian islands. Erdödy left Zug on 26th April to deliver this message to the Emperor. On the evening of 4th May he again arrived in Switzerland, this time in Neuchâtel, and brought Prince Sixtus two letters, one from the Emperor in German and one from the Empress in French. In the former the Emperor thanked his brother-in-law for his communication, and expressed his satisfaction over the sound foundations for peace which had been laid, but said that two points

were still obscure. "It is absolutely necessary that I should see you," he added. "Peace depends on your coming." The Empress Zita wrote: "*Il y a des choses nouvelles et qui ne sont pas claires. L'Italie veut obtenir davantage par vous que directement par nous. Viens.*"<sup>1</sup>

The courier also brought an oral message from the Emperor. About three weeks before Italy had made an offer of peace, and limited her demands to the Italian part of the South Tyrol. The Emperor had rejected the offer on account of the negotiations then in progress. Russia, too, had offered Austria peace. If peace were concluded with the Entente Turkey and Bulgaria would follow; but these should not at present be included in the peace, because this course would involve delays. Count Erdödy also told the Prince of Czernin's desire that, in the case of Austria's concluding peace, the French officers at present opposing Austria on the Russian front should be transferred to the section of the Russian front facing Germany.<sup>2</sup>

Prince Sixtus and Erdödy started for Vienna on 5th May, arriving on the evening of the 7th and putting up at Erdödy's house. Prince Sixtus proceeded next day to Laxenburg, where the Emperor Karl received him at 4 p.m. in a private part of the park guarded by a detachment of the Guards.

Prince Sixtus first discussed the general position.<sup>3</sup> This was, he said, favourable to Austria to the extent that Russia, Serbia, and Rumania were no longer a military danger. Every reasonable person in the Monarchy would rally round the Emperor in order to secure a reasonable peace, even if it involved sacrifices. The position of the Entente had considerably improved owing to America's entry into the War. Nothing could withstand the development of the strength of

<sup>1</sup> There are certain new points which are not clear. Italy is trying to get more from you than from us directly. Come.

<sup>2</sup> Prince Sixtus of Bourbon, *L'offre*, etc., page 161.

<sup>3</sup> The conversation between the Emperor Karl, Prince Sixtus, and Count Czernin is of importance for estimating the part played by Czernin in the "Sixtus affair." Prince Sixtus's disclosures remain uncontradicted from any authoritative source, so that it cannot be assumed that they are contrary to the facts to any appreciable degree. That the sense and main features of the conversation are correctly reproduced is also shown by a comparison of the Emperor Karl's letter to Prince Sixtus with the draft published by him (see Appendix X), and also from Count Czernin's statements.

the United States. Submarine warfare had failed in its object, as the Germans could not remain unaware. A resolute attitude on the part of Austria would make a separate Austrian peace into a general peace, if not immediately, certainly in the course of the year. If the War were continued there was a danger that the United States would support the dismemberment of the Monarchy. The Emperor agreed with the Prince's views. As far as the peace negotiations were concerned, the Italian difficulty was the only thing that might for the moment hold up everything. He promised to give the Prince exact details of the step taken by Italy at Berne. The agent had been an Italian colonel. They then went on to speak of the territorial concessions which Italy might be promised and of the compensations to be exacted.

Count Czernin then appeared, and began by repeating what the Emperor had said about the step taken by Italy, and promising the Prince further details (name of the agent, date, etc.). Prince Sixtus then briefly repeated the explanations he had already given the Emperor, whereupon Czernin expressed in vigorous terms the view that the compensation should be given by Italy and not by Germany, adding that Austria could not surrender any territory until the Entente had guaranteed the integrity of the Monarchy. Prince Sixtus then asked Count Czernin what attitude Germany would take to a peace concluded by Austria. Czernin answered that it was a whim of the French to believe that Austria was entirely in Germany's pocket; nothing could be farther from the truth. The Austrian army, freed now from the Russians, at present disposed of an adequate number of divisions to compel respect from any opponent whatever. He said that he handled the German Chancellor without gloves, and did not allow himself to be browbeaten by the rhodomontades of the German Supreme Army Command. He then urged that the next and final meeting should be between two diplomatists and that the Entente should send one single representative of all the powers composing it. He then took his leave, spoke to the Emperor for a moment or two longer, and, shaking hands with the Prince, said he was very happy to see that things looked so promising. "I hope," he added with a smile, "that we shall soon have ceased to be enemies."

At the end of their interview Prince Sixtus asked the Emperor whether Austria was not to some extent merely the tool of Germany in these peace efforts, in which case an Austrian peace proposal would be nothing but a disguised German offer. After some consideration, the Emperor replied that this idea was entirely erroneous. "If Germany continues to refuse to listen to our reasonable advice, we shall make peace without Germany. This is our right and our duty, and we are in a position to do so. But if it were to come to a break between Germany and ourselves, I must be able to count on the help of the Entente."

Next day, the 9th of May, Her Majesty's birthday, the Emperor again received the Prince, also at 4 o'clock in the Laxenburg Park, and handed him a letter written in his own hand. This was the "second Imperial letter."<sup>1</sup> He also gave him another document on this occasion, remarking that it was an *aide-mémoire* written by Count Czernin, in which Czernin recapitulated under four heads what he had stated the previous day in the Emperor's presence.<sup>2</sup> The Emperor and Empress expressed to the Prince their confident belief that peace would soon be concluded, and that a new life would then begin for the Monarchy.

The Prince left Vienna that evening and arrived in Neuchâtel on 11th May. On 12th May Count Erdödy brought him further information about the Italian peace proposal. A special messenger from Italian G.H.Q. had appeared in Berne about a week before the conference at Saint-Jean-de-Maurienne (19th April), and had visited first the German and then the Austrian ambassador. Inquiries were addressed to Germany in the first place. Italy desired to make peace with Austria, on condition that she agreed to cede Trento and Aquileja. The reason for this offer was the general feeling of the Italian army, which was sick of the War, and fear of revolution. Sonnino knew nothing about this step. It was certain, however, that the offer had been made in agreement with a great political party (Giolitti, Tittoni),

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix XI.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix XII. Mistakes occur in Prince Sixtus's translation of this *aide-mémoire*. But the translation did not come into question for the diplomatic negotiations, as the German text was enclosed in the Emperor's letter, and Poincaré—he is an Alsatian—understands German perfectly.

and emanated from the King. Germany was requested to persuade Austria to accept the proposal.

The real facts about this Italian peace offer mentioned in the second Imperial letter are as obscure as the part which Count Czernin played in the affair. It is certain that the second Imperial letter was based on such a peace offer, that the brief reports sent to Prince Sixtus through Count Erdödy by the Emperor and Empress on 4th May, 1917, mention such a peace offer, and that Prince Sixtus states in his book<sup>1</sup> that Count Czernin, at the interview at Laxenburg on 8th May, 1917, confirmed the Emperor's statements on the subject of an Italian peace offer and undertook to supply further details. The Emperor also told me of an Italian peace offer, and Count Czernin made a report to the Emperor on the subject on the journey to Homburg on 2nd April, 1917 (see page 240). But, on 8th January, 1920, Count Czernin made a public declaration<sup>2</sup> that no information of a peace offer made by the Italian Government ever reached him during his period of office. He had "also no knowledge whatever" of "a peace offer from Cadorna, of which a letter of the Emperor purports to speak." This declaration is wrong in any case, for it is in conflict with the fact that Count Czernin expressly mentioned an Italian separate peace offer at the Berlin Conference of 26th March, 1917. Even if this alleged peace offer, in view of the date (March, 1917), cannot be identified with the one on which the second Imperial letter is based, and which was apparently made at the beginning of April, it is, nevertheless, very strange that Count Czernin publicly stated that he had "no knowledge whatever" of an Italian offer. This public statement of Czernin's is also completely at variance with what is said by Bethmann Hollweg in his *Betrachtungen zum Weltkrieg*.<sup>3</sup> Bethmann states that Czernin informed him on 13th May that "England, France, and Italy had made Austria-Hungary an offer to conclude a separate peace in return for the surrender of the Trentino and certain islands to Italy." This information was thus given a

<sup>1</sup> *L'offre de paix séparée de l'Autriche*, pages 157 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> Declaration of ex-Minister Ottakar Czernin of 8th January, 1920, printed in the *Neue Freie Presse* for 12th January, 1920. See Appendix XIII.

<sup>3</sup> Vol. ii, pages 203 et seq.



few days after the Emperor's interview with Prince Sixtus at Laxenburg (8th May, 1917), at which Count Czernin was present and at which the Italian offer must have been discussed. The assembling of these facts shows at least that no great weight can be attached to Count Czernin's statements. It also, however, shows a great probability that Czernin, if an offer was not made at that time, misled the Emperor on an important point by the reports he made,<sup>1</sup> in saying which I do not allege premeditation. I consider that confusing illusions with facts is quite consistent with the extraordinary state of nervous over-excitement which possessed Count Czernin during his whole period of office, and which was to some extent natural considering his extraordinarily difficult duties. But Czernin's public declaration made in the year 1920, according to which he had no knowledge of an Italian offer, cannot be excused on the grounds of nervous strain, for this declaration was made long after the War, and certainly quite deliberately. He must have known that it was not in accordance with the facts, and that it made the contents of the Emperor's letter appear to be an invention in the eyes of the public.

With the second Imperial letter the so-called "Sixtus affair" ended, so far as the Emperor and Count Czernin were concerned. The peace proposal supplemented by the "second Imperial letter" remained unanswered. In spite of

<sup>1</sup> Professor Fester, on page 58 of his book, *Die Politik Kaiser Karls*, describes an Italian peace feeler, quoting his sources. Hints were thrown out to a member of the German Embassy in Switzerland at Zürich at the beginning of February and the beginning of March, 1917, that King Victor Emanuel was prepared to conclude peace in return for certain concessions. But Berlin objected to playing the mediator between Italy and Austria-Hungary. Also surprise was caused by the Italians' warning that an offensive against Italy would nip all possibility of negotiations in the bud. Suspicion was aroused that it was perhaps merely a military trick, a manoeuvre to avert the dreaded offensive. The Federal Chancellor, therefore, when informing Czernin of the matter, added a request that he would note it without reporting to the Emperor Karl on the subject. It seems to me very probable that Professor Fester is right in identifying the "manoeuvre" with the peace offer which was the basis of the second Imperial letter. This would be a fresh proof of the incorrectness of Czernin's statement of 8th January, 1920, and also of the inadequacy, even levity, of his reports to the Emperor.

Poincaré's strenuous efforts to continue spinning the threads of peace so happily started, Ribot succeeded in breaking them. Whereas previously he had been merely cautious and sceptical, he now, when the supplemented peace offer seemed to guarantee a possibility, even a probability, of success, deliberately became a stumbling block. He joined forces with Sonnino and destroyed the edifice of peace. A meeting was arranged between the King of England, the President of the French Republic, and the King of Italy. This meeting was intended to decide the attitude to be adopted to the mysterious Italian peace feeler mentioned in the Emperor Karl's letter. But the King of Italy did not come. Sonnino had barred his way. The invitation to a joint conference sent to the King of Italy—another subject of discussion had been put forward as a pretext—remained unanswered on Sonnino's part, although Lloyd George repeated the invitation urgently. In Paris and London lively surprise was expressed at this, and people thought that Sonnino smelt a rat, "*qu'il flaire quelque chose.*" He might have been warned, for it was possible that the King, under the influence of Giolitti and Tittoni, would not have shown himself so intransigent as Sonnino.

It throws a peculiar light on Ribot's character that, in spite of his solemn promises, he informed Baron Sonnino in July, 1917, of the whole course of the negotiations conducted by Prince Sixtus, and even gave him the Emperor's letters and all the other relevant documents to read. No one will grudge Ribot the satisfaction that he felt when Baron Sonnino expressed his cordial thanks for this "absolutely correct attitude." Whether it was really a feeling that it was his duty to adopt an "absolutely correct attitude" to Italy that had a stronger influence on Ribot than the thought of the undeniable interests of France at the time, of the welfare of Europe, and of the sacrifice of innumerable human lives which a continuation of the War would require, is a question which everybody may answer for himself. Anatole France was certainly quite right when he said: "*Ribot est une vieille canaille d'avoir négligé une pareille occasion. Un roi de France, oui, un roi aurait pitié de notre pauvre peuple exsangue, exténué, n'en pouvant plus. Mais la démocratie est sans cœur et sans en-*

*trailles. Au service des puissances d'argent, elle est impitoyable et inhumaine."*<sup>1</sup>

### III

Now for a critical examination of the "Sixtus affair," and an investigation of the Emperor Karl's intentions and of the part played by Count Czernin in the matter.

Stress must first be laid on the fact that these efforts to secure peace, unhappily fruitless, can be correctly judged only in the light of the political situation and temper at the time when they were undertaken, the spring of 1917, and not in that of the entirely altered situation at the time when they became known to the public, April, 1918.

Light is thrown on the political situation in the spring of 1917, and on the responsible Government's view of it by the memorandum dated 12th April, 1917, which was composed jointly by the Emperor Karl and Count Czernin. In view of the perilous state of affairs,<sup>2</sup> the Emperor and Count Czernin found themselves impelled to try to put an end to the War as quickly as possible. At first both were concerned with securing "tolerable peace conditions" from the Entente, in order by this means to exert pressure on Germany, that is, to persuade Germany to submission and in this way work for a general peace. The idea was quite logical. Thus far there was complete agreement between the Emperor and his Minister. But at the very moment when the first steps towards *rapprochement* with the Entente were taken, came a diver-

<sup>1</sup> "Ribot is an old rascal for having let a chance like this slip. A king of France, ay, a king would have pitied our poor, weak, enfeebled people, whose strength was exhausted. But democracy is without heart or bowels. In the interests of the powers of finance, it is pitiless and inhuman."

<sup>2</sup> It may be objected that the position was regarded in an exaggeratedly pessimistic manner, since Austria continued the war for considerably more than another year. To this objection must be opposed the fact that the continuation of the war meant only the complete exhaustion of the Monarchy and its abandonment to its enemies at home and abroad. The spring of 1917 was the last opportunity for withdrawing Austria-Hungary from the war without condemning it to destruction. The facts that follow in the narrative are a proof of the correctness of the views expressed in the memorandum.

gence in their ideas about the means to be applied for the attainment of their object. In a memorandum dated 20th February, 1917, which Prince Sixtus was to submit to the President of the French Republic, Czernin proclaimed the indissolubility of our alliance.<sup>1</sup> Even if at that time the Emperor was not yet aiming at preparing the way for a separate peace, nevertheless, he quite rightly feared that this announcement would make the peace negotiations entirely useless unless, at the same time, an assurance were offered with regard to Alsace-Lorraine. Now Count Czernin had merely stated in his note that Austria-Hungary would put no obstacles in the way if Germany were ready to surrender Alsace-Lorraine.<sup>2</sup> This was more than inadequate; it was nothing at all. It is impossible to assume that Czernin seriously believed that France would enter on peace negotiations on such a basis, especially in view of the proclamation of the indissolubility of the German-Austrian alliance. But since Count Czernin also wished for the success of the attempts at *rapprochement*, in order to secure the elbow room<sup>3</sup> he wanted as regards Germany, it was only natural for the Emperor Karl to make additions<sup>4</sup> to Count Czernin's note which would provide a practical basis for an understanding. That the Emperor was not aiming at a separate peace either, is shown by the fact that he made no addition to the first point in the Czernin memorandum, the one which stressed the indissolubility of the alliance, but, nevertheless, declared with regard to Alsace-Lorraine that he would support France on that point and try by all the means in his power to exercise pressure on Germany. The Emperor thus, as early as February, 1917, substituted practical means for the entirely unpractical ones of his Minister. Poincaré at the time described Count Czernin's statement to Prince Sixtus as inexact, colourless and too diplomatic, but declared the Emperor Karl's addenda to be clear and adequate as a basis for negotiations.

Soon after this first step towards *rapprochement* with the

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix V.

<sup>2</sup> According to the translation into French. The original German text of Czernin's memorandum was burned after the translation was made, by Prince Xavier, it is alleged.

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix XIII.

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix VI.

enemy powers, the visit of Prince Sixtus to Laxenburg occurred. Who was responsible for summoning the Prince is shown by the above-mentioned letter of Count Czernin to the Empress.<sup>1</sup> This letter is important evidence for the part played by the Minister in the "Sixtus affair." It must be assumed as self-evident that Count Czernin, in addressing a communication to the Empress in such an important matter, was fully aware of taking a step for which he would have to bear the responsibility. It must, therefore, also be taken as self-evident that Count Czernin had weighed the words which he wrote. The following passage in the letter is particularly striking: "I consider it of the greatest importance that Prince Sixtus should himself come to Your Majesty. If Your Majesty could speak with him personally, our cause would be appreciably advanced." Count Czernin does not write that he attached importance to his speaking to Prince Sixtus, or say that he would negotiate with him at all by word of mouth; he writes that he attaches importance to the Empress's doing this. Count Czernin, therefore, in this letter himself set up the "collateral Government" (*Nebenregierung*) of which he was later to complain so bitterly. Can there, however, in such a case and in such circumstances be any reason to talk of a *Nebenregierung* at all? Count Czernin could not have regarded Prince Sixtus as a person dependent on our Government, but must have regarded him as a person of high position well accredited in the eyes of the enemy powers. He must have seen quite clearly in advance that, by entrusting this man with so delicate a mission, he was surrendering its conduct out of his own hands, all the more as he expressly left the interview with Prince Sixtus to the Empress. He thus himself desired that the private relations between the Imperial couple and Prince Sixtus should be used in the interests of "our cause," as he expressed it. In such circumstances it cannot be wondered that Count Czernin was not informed of all the details of the business which were communicated to our enemies in pursuance of the attempts at *rapprochement*, decided upon by himself in conjunction with the Emperor. Count Czernin could not have believed that the negotiations with the Prince could be exhausted by the

<sup>1</sup> See page 228.

miserable contributions made by him. It rather seems as if Count Czernin did not wish to be a party to all the details of the negotiations, in order to ensure himself freedom of opposition later in the event of their breaking down.

The fact is that Count Czernin recommended that Prince Sixtus should come to Vienna and made this possible, that he promoted the continuation of the discussions between him and the Imperial couple, that, moreover, he permitted Count Erdödy to travel as a Foreign Office messenger, that when ever Erdödy returned to Vienna, he reported to Czernin, and that Czernin himself more than once negotiated with the Prince. It is also true that Count Czernin, like the Emperor, was of opinion that an end must be made by the autumn of 1917 at the latest,<sup>1</sup> but peace could only be attained if, in addition to the sacrifices which Austria was prepared to make, the surrender of Alsace-Lorraine to France<sup>2</sup> and the restoration of Belgium<sup>3</sup> were assured by Germany. Even Count Czernin does not seem to have believed that such an assurance could be secured from Germany without further ado, for in this case a journey to Berlin would have been sufficient. His view was rather, as he himself declared subsequently, that we should strive to obtain an offer of peace from the Entente in order to exercise pressure on Germany.<sup>4</sup> For this reason he supported action through the agency of Prince Sixtus. But, in order to obtain an offer of peace by these means, it was necessary, particularly if in the last resort the idea was to prepare the way for a general peace, to inform the Entente that we would advocate to our ally the surrender of Alsace-Lorraine to France and the restoration of Belgium. The object of the intervention of Prince Sixtus, which Czernin himself desired and supported, would be absolutely unintelligible unless we can assume a substantial basis for this intervention. And this substantial basis could only be our informing the Entente that we ourselves were prepared to make sacrifices, and would advocate in Berlin the surrender of

<sup>1</sup> Memorandum of Count Czernin, dated 12th April, 1917, page 244.

<sup>2</sup> Homburg negotiations, letter from the Emperor Karl to the German Crown Prince, dated 20th August, 1917.

<sup>3</sup> Count Czernin's memorandum of 18th February, 1917. See Appendix V.

<sup>4</sup> Czernin's statements of 12th January, 1920. See Appendix XIII.

Alsace-Lorraine and the restoration of Belgium. And this is the subject of the Emperor Karl's much-discussed first letter to his brother-in-law. There is no mention in the letter of the intention to conclude a separate peace. The Emperor never had any idea of doing this without first placing an alternative before Germany. His interview with Prince Sixtus at Laxenburg on 23rd March, 1917, rather shows that he intended first to try to bring the Germans to reason and to persuade them to give way. They were to be given a choice, either to accept the conditions on which alone peace was possible, or to agree that Austria should separate from them. Prince Sixtus's statements on the subject of his conversations with the Emperor and Count Czernin on those occasions (23rd and 24th March) show that Czernin too believed that we should ultimately have to break with the Germans, because they would never agree to cede Alsace-Lorraine to France. The alliance would fall to pieces on the day on which the conclusion of a reasonable peace was made impossible for Austria by Germany. But as Prince Sixtus's statements, although, so far as I am aware, they have never yet been refuted, are not evidence for judging the part played by Czernin, his own statements—made after the events—shall serve as a basis for an examination of his intentions. According to these statements, Count Czernin did not intend, in any event, to conclude a separate peace. Therefore there apparently was a divergence of aim between the Emperor and his Minister as early as the occasion of Prince Sixtus's first visit to Laxenburg. Count Czernin made the following statement on 12th January, 1920: "But even in the event of their having obtained a revision of the London Treaty, the Austro-Hungarian Government never had the intention of betraying Germany, but only of working for a general peace with greater elbow room."<sup>1</sup>

This would appear to indicate that Count Czernin excluded the idea of making a separate peace in every event, even in the event of Germany's rejecting peace conditions which might lead to a general peace, and in the event of a revision of the London Pact. There runs, however, like a red thread through all Count Czernin's rhetorical and literary

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix XIII.

attempts to justify his policy, the idea that a break with Germany, a separate peace, would not have availed us at all, because the resolutions of the "London Conference"<sup>1</sup> would have been carried out, and the ultimate dismemberment of the Monarchy could not, therefore, have been avoided. For this reason the military power of Germany was Austria-Hungary's only protection.

These two ideas are contradictory: for "in the event of securing a revision of the London Treaty" we should no longer have had to fear a dismemberment of the Monarchy. In this event, therefore, the circumstance which Count Czernin says would have made a separate peace useless, would not have come into question. So it cannot be true that Count Czernin did not give more consideration to the idea of a separate peace solely because such a peace would not have prevented the dismemberment of the Monarchy.

Czernin gives still another reason for his alleged rejection of a separate peace in the sentence of his declaration of 12th January, 1920, quoted above: "But even in the event of their having obtained a revision of the London Treaty, the Austro-Hungarian Government never had the intention of betraying Germany, but only of working for a general peace with greater elbow room." Czernin would thus have regarded any further utilization of "obtaining a revision of the London Treaty" for the purpose of greater "elbow room"<sup>2</sup> with regard to Germany as a "betrayal." The Emperor could not have followed his Minister in this conception; there could have been no question of a "betrayal," since the Emperor Karl purposed to give Germany the choice either of yielding and thus preparing the way for a general peace, or agreeing to Austria's concluding a separate peace with the Entente. I have never heard of anyone intending a betrayal first informing the person to be betrayed of his intention of betraying him.

<sup>1</sup> It seems to be very doubtful whether the London Pact really played the part in Czernin's arguments on the peace question which he assigns to it—after the events—in his book.

<sup>2</sup> This "elbow room" could in any case only have been expressed in threats of concluding a separate peace, with no serious intention of putting the threat into effect. I believe that Germany very soon recognized this "elbow room" for what it really was—bluff.



Thus, as these subsequent statements of Czernin cannot bear the test of serious examination, it is more reasonable to assume that Czernin's ideas were fundamentally the same as those of the Emperor Karl.

The position of the Monarchy in the spring of 1917 was, as I have already said, desperate. Austria had fought by the side of her ally to the limits of her strength. To carry on the War longer would inevitably result in ruin at home and the dismemberment of the Empire. Germany was in an incomparably more favourable position. She might be defeated and weakened to the point of exhaustion, but she could not be broken as our Monarchy could. She was not, as we were, fighting for her existence, but for the integrity of her frontiers, in reality, for a "victory peace" and for the extension of her power. If we, in our desperate position, had been assured of acceptable peace conditions, and had been unable to persuade Germany to submit, it would have been our natural duty of self-preservation to break with our ally and sign the separate peace offered to us. It would have been forgetfulness of our duty to the peoples of Austria if we, with inevitable ruin before our eyes, had sent them once again into the fire, exposed them still longer to frightful privations, deceived them with delusive hopes, merely in order to go on supporting our ally in his obstinate and selfish pursuit of his own aims. As Bismarck said: "The tenability of all treaties between great states is limited, so soon as it is put to the test in the fight for existence. No great nation will ever be moved to sacrifice its life on the altar of loyalty to its treaties if it is compelled to judge between the two; the *ultra posse nemo obligatur* cannot be invalidated by any clause in a treaty." Count Czernin, however, would have considered it to be "dishonourable conduct"<sup>1</sup> if the Emperor Karl had broken with his ally; in his complete failure to recognize the duties which his Emperor and master owed to the peoples of the Monarchy, he did not see that while personal loyalty must be preferred to one's own interests, no prince could feel it to be "honourable" to sacrifice his people and Empire to the exercise of a personal virtue.

Count Czernin introduces still another argument. He be-

<sup>1</sup> Count Czernin's memorandum of 12th April, 1917.

believes that, in the event of a separate peace, the Tyrol and Bohemia would have become theatres of war. That is possible, but by no means certain: the political and strategical position would have undergone such a complete alteration through the conclusion of a separate peace that the direct consequences of such a measure, in view of the great number of unknown factors which would have come into play, cannot even be conjectured. The dragging in of analogies from a quite different military situation, the marching of German troops on the Tyrol after the offer of a separate peace under Andrassy in the autumn of 1918, is quite irrelevant and unconvincing. In any case, the march of German troops on Bohemia and the Tyrol would have been a lesser evil compared with the continuation of the War and the total ruin then in prospect. For in that case Germany would have acted as the open enemy of Austria-Hungary, which at the conclusion of a general peace after the collapse of Germany might have been to the great detriment of the Prussian house and the Bismarckian Empire. I recall that the Entente, at the beginning of August, 1917, offered Austria Silesia and Bavaria in the event of strict neutrality, but that the Emperor Karl declared that he could not be paid for neutrality out of the pockets of his ally. His point of view might have been different if Germany had been our enemy.

Moreover, that during the whole "Sixtus affair" it was ultimately only a general peace that was in question, is proved by the fact that Prince Sixtus thought it important that the Emperor Karl should declare his agreement with the view on the basis of which peace negotiations with Germany could be opened: for Alsace-Lorraine and Belgium did not affect Austrian interests but exclusively those of Germany. The Entente thus gave it clearly to be understood that a general peace was to be had at this price.<sup>1</sup> It is true that the Entente states-

<sup>1</sup> This refutes the argument by which Professor Fester thinks he can justify the obstinacy of Ludendorff and the whole German Supreme Command, which proved fatal for Germany and the whole of Central Europe. Professor Fester writes: "He [Czernin] too had heard from the Prince's lips that the Entente would not make peace with Germany. It is a shocking distortion of facts for him to make Ludendorff responsible for having wrecked the peace by opposition to a timely sacrifice." Professor Fester makes a display of microscopic exactness in his treatment of docu-

men repeatedly declared that they would not make peace with Germany until she was vanquished. "*Personne ne voudra traiter avec l'Allemagne avant qu'elle ne soit battue*," wrote Prince Sixtus to the Emperor Karl on 16th March, 1917. But the "Sixtus affair" affords almost documentary proof that this was mere rodomontade, behind which was concealed the firm conviction that Germany would only surrender Alsace-Lorraine in the event of complete defeat. For my part I can ultimately base my judgment only on the authoritative documents available, but even Count Czernin, who was familiar with the position at the time, seems to have been of the same opinion on this point. Proof of this may be found in the following sentence in his memorandum (relating to Poland and Rumania, page 238): "If Germany gives up France and Belgium, and something else, peace is already won." If the Entente had not been prepared to treat for a general peace, they would have declared that the Emperor Karl's promises to support France's claims to Alsace-Lorraine were of no value, because the Entente would not make peace with Germany until she was crushed; that they could only discuss the conditions which affected Austria-Hungary, and on which a separate peace with that power could be brought about. In order to be able to exercise pressure on Germany and thus pave the way for general peace, it was, of course, necessary first to prepare the ground for a separate peace. Czernin also took this view, although he did not expressly use the word "separate peace" in his written contributions to the peace efforts of that time. His *aide-mémoire* of 9th May, communicated to Prince Sixtus (Point IV), contains the words: "Nevertheless, Austria Hungary is prepared to carry on the conversations, and is, as before, disposed to work for an honourable peace and thus also prepare the way for general world peace." That is to say, Count Czernin contrasts general peace with a peace for which he was, as before, disposed to work. That this can only be a separate peace is obvious. Moreover, he expressly spoke of a separate peace to Bethmann Hollweg on 13th May, 1917.<sup>1</sup>

ments, but he looks through tendenciously coloured glasses, and moreover overlooks things which can be seen without a microscope, if one wants to see them.

<sup>1</sup> See page 251.

The conduct the Emperor Karl intended to pursue towards Germany may be seen from a comparison of the draft composed by Prince Sixtus on 5th May, at Neuchâtel, for the second Imperial letter,<sup>1</sup> with the one written to his brother-in-law on 9th May by the Emperor.<sup>2</sup> Prince Sixtus wished to obtain from the Emperor an immediate binding declaration of his readiness to make a separate peace with the Entente, that is to say, without consulting Germany beforehand. The Emperor did not agree to this proposal, because his intentions were different. He merely wished to reach the basis for a separate peace, to come forward with them and face Germany with the alternative: either make peace on the conditions on which alone a peace with the Entente is possible, or we shall conclude a separate peace on the terms offered to us. In any case we shall not continue the War because our total ruin would be the inevitable consequence. Czernin's ideas could not have been very different. I have already fully explained the grounds for this assumption in an earlier passage. If the Emperor Karl, disregarding the preliminary conditions on which alone a general peace with the Entente was attainable, had negotiated independently, it might be maintained that the fundamental view-point of the Emperor was substantially different from that of his Minister. This was not the case, however. The negotiations and the available documents rather go to prove that the Emperor Karl also kept general peace steadily in view as the ultimate goal. It was only in the matter of the realization of the idea that he took a different road from his Minister. And his Minister must have recognized that the means used by the Emperor were the only ones that promised success. The Emperor had the will to peace, Czernin only the desire for it. In order to reach the basis for a separate peace in a reasonable time, the Entente had to be made to recognize clearly that our intentions were serious. Czernin could not be moved to take the step. So the Emperor dared to take it himself, for everyone who keeps in mind Czernin's contributions to the peace negotiations is bound to see that doomsday would have come sooner than any result from negotiations carried on as Czernin wished to carry them on. The Emperor Karl had

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix X.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix XI.

to take the decisive step without the knowledge of his Minister. He had to shoulder the entire responsibility if he wished to obtain peace. He had to ask himself, and did ask himself, whether he could let his country and people be ruined because he could find no Minister who really desired to make peace, or, if he desired it, had the courage to take the responsibility for the use of the only practical means. The Entente demanded a document which would place our serious intentions beyond all doubt. That was quite natural. Who was to prepare this document? The Minister would not, so the Emperor had to do it. A change of Ministers would have hardly been possible, as the Emperor would have had to entrust every prospective candidate with knowledge of the peace negotiations, always with the risk that he would not accept office. And in view of the necessity for the strictest secrecy, that would hardly have been possible. And the Emperor Karl was aware that fundamentally he was of one mind with his Minister. After those letters had been written, only a thin wall separated us from peace. There would still have been time at that date. And in the event of success how the Austrian people, nay the whole world, would have blessed the hand which wrote those letters and thus put an end to bloodshed! It is not right to condemn this step merely because success was denied to it. And the German Empire? If the peace negotiations of the spring of 1917 had brought peace, how much Germany would have owed to the Emperor Karl! the preservation of hundreds of thousands of human lives, of the dynasty, the army, the fleet, of civil order, and of national property. And yet, since the ultimate end was hidden, there would have been heard in Germany only cries of discontent at the loss of Alsace-Lorraine, and of indignation at the Habsburger by whose "treachery" Germany had been so sorely wronged. It would be a great mistake to imagine that the Emperor Karl had no foreknowledge or presentiment of the tragic destiny appointed for him.

Nothing could be more preposterous than to conclude from the episode usually styled the "Sixtus affair" that the Emperor Karl betrayed our ally. He protected Austrian interests and set them above his duty as a ruler. The rulers in Germany acted no differently. I recall in this connection the

Bülow affair already mentioned in an earlier passage. From the very outset Germany took the view that Austria must be prepared to make sacrifices in order to induce Italy to fulfil her treaty of alliance. As early as the beginning of August, 1914, the Emperor Wilhelm said to Lieutenant Field Marshal Count Stürgkh, the Austro-Hungarian military plenipotentiary at German Great Headquarters, that Austria must by the surrender of the South Tyrol bring Italy over to the side of the Central Powers, or at least oblige her to observe neutrality. In December, 1914, the German Government sent Prince Bülow to Rome as ambassador in place of Freiherr von Flotow. Bülow, by his marriage to the Princess Camporeale, the divorced wife of the Prussian Ambassador, Count Dönhoff, was related to many Italian families, and, moreover, by his ownership of the famous Villa Malta he was at home in Rome; finally, in virtue of his eminent position as an ex-Federal Chancellor he seemed peculiarly fitted to influence Italy. On 19th December, 1914, Bülow had his first conversation with Sonnino, and did not hesitate to say emphatically at this interview, in complete opposition to Austria, that Italy would be quite justified in demanding that Austria should enter on a discussion of the question of compensation in accordance with Article VII of the Treaty of Alliance. From that time onwards Prince Bülow unswervingly encouraged the Italian Government in their demand for the Trentino, against the will of the Austrian Government. I do not intend to go further into the negotiations carried on at that time. I merely note that Germany, in order to secure at least Italian neutrality, carried on negotiations with Italy on the subject of the surrender of historic Austrian soil.

Moreover, Germany seems also to have had no objections to making peace proposals to France behind the back and to the detriment of her Austrian ally. Prince Sixtus of Bourbon-Parma relates that when he first informed Jules Cambon, the General Secretary of the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs, on 11th February, 1917, of the Emperor Karl's readiness to make peace, Cambon remarked: "A peace proposal from the Austrian Emperor is a novelty. Hitherto, only German peace proposals have reached the Allied Powers. These proposals were as follows: Constantinople and the Bukovina

for the Russians, Transylvania for the Rumanians, Russian and Austrian Poland to be an independent kingdom, while Prussia was to retain German Poland, Serbia plus Albania to be given to the Serbs, and the Trentino and Trieste to the Italians; for France no definite promise; as regards Belgium, vague promises, which do not preclude German domination in Belgium. . . . The same game was repeated at the time of the official peace proposals. . . ."<sup>1</sup>

To show that the Pan-Germans themselves, who were most vociferous in crying "treachery," never felt seriously inconvenienced by their treaty obligations to Austria, I shall adduce only one example, a spontaneous confession. The author of the Pan-German propagandist pamphlet, *Berlin-Bagdad*, Dr. A. Ritter (Winterstetten) let the cat out of the bag by writing, in 1913: "The question whether the German Empire would not act most wisely by rescuing the old federal lands of Austria from the threat of slavization and incorporating them in the Empire, and leaving the rest to their fate, this very old question has been very frequently raised since last autumn, and generally answered in the affirmative." The honourable Pan-Germans would have regarded it as consistent with their treaty obligations simply to fall on their ally and cut her down. But the very prudent consideration was involved whether Germany would not ultimately lose more than she would gain from the crushing of Austria. I do not wish to deny the honourable Pan-Germans the right to a prudent preservation of their own advantage. There is no sentiment in politics. But I am bound to deny them the right adversely to criticize the political conduct of the Austrian Government in the matter of loyalty to her alliance, and I can in the last resort only regret that we always allowed ourselves to be too much guided by sentiment.

Finally, what secret meaning did the official representative of the German Government, the Federal Chancellor, Prince Bismarck, in his time attach to the treaty of alliance with Austria? He himself spoke quite clearly on the point. Soon after the Franco-Prussian War he had a conversation with General Sheridan, a special emissary from the United States

<sup>1</sup> Prince Sixtus of Bourbon, *L'offre de paix séparée de l'Autriche*, pages 47-48.

to Berlin, and declared that he (Bismarck) had begun his task and was compelled to complete it. France would be paralysed for ten or fifteen years. He must use this time to realize the complete unification of Germany, as Austria could not exist much longer as an independent State. His support in this task would be the Russian Government, which for its part would be able to pursue its aims in the East unchecked.<sup>1</sup> This, therefore, and not a relation of sincere friendship was the real meaning of the alliance. For the German Government it was only a stage, a step towards the destruction of the sovereignty and integrity and towards the dismemberment of its ally, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. The *démembrement* of Austria, the aim of our official enemies in the Entente, was the motto of our ally at a much earlier period. I shall not make any further critical remarks on this point, but shall content myself with recording the fact.

It is part of the technique of German statesmen and generals in any discussion of the Emperor Karl's reign to reproach him with ingratitude. This reproach presupposes the assumption of a special obligation. The question arises whether such an obligation existed at all, and if it existed on which side it was the greatest. The Germans are very fond of using the phrase "Nibelungen troth." Who showed this kind of loyalty? Was it not the Emperor Franz Joseph, who answered King Edward's invitation to take part in the encirclement of Germany with a decided "No." Quite unostentatiously, in a very quiet way, the Emperor Franz Joseph then showed "Nibelungen troth" and honourable conduct of which only a Hapsburg was capable. And the Emperor Karl's conduct was no different. In the year 1917, as I have already mentioned, I had in my hands an offer of a separate peace from the Entente which was extraordinarily favourable to Austria, but the Emperor declared it to be useless because it was not consistent with his obligations as the ally of Germany. The fact is that the alliance was maintained by Austria-Hungary longer than was to her advantage. For Prussian Germany, adherence to the alliance—this must be

<sup>1</sup> Freiherr von Lederer, the Austro-Hungarian ambassador in New York, in his report to Count Beust, dated 15th June, 1917, describes the above conversation of Bismarck with General Sheridan as an incontrovertible fact.



especially emphasized—was a law of self-preservation and had nothing at all to do with loyalty. Was there any possibility for Germany of forming an alliance with any other State? Was not the alliance with the Hapsburg Empire the only thing that protected Germany from “splendid isolation”? By her Prussian methods she had mobilized against herself the antipathies and the jealous mistrust of all countries and peoples in the world. The question of maintaining the alliance was different in the case of Austria-Hungary. Other ways were open to her; England, France, and the United States were not her enemies. For Austria, therefore, adherence to the alliance was a true display of loyalty against her own advantage. Mutual military assistance, however, was a natural obligation of both sides, the fulfilment of which was to the interests of both. The Austro-Hungarian army had a claim to gratitude at least equal to that which it justly paid to the German army, with unreserved recognition of and admiration for its brilliant exploits.

#### IV

The Emperor and Count Czernin's attempts to arrive at a peace through the agency of Prince Sixtus of Bourbon-Parma must be recorded as having definitely failed in May, 1917. In the spring of 1918, that is, a year after they were over and done with, they became known to the public. The political situation had changed in the interval. Count Czernin now believed that we could find salvation only in the ultimate victory of the German arms. This was, of course, a mistake: the War had long ago been lost, and there was no road visible which would have led to peace. There is, however, no doubt that at this time we were dependent from the military point of view on the assistance of Germany. That had to be the decisive factor. We were steering the “German course.” This was the automatic consequence of earlier serious blunders, both in home and foreign policy.

It is very strange that the disclosure of the peace movement of the year 1917, which is usually styled the “Sixtus

affair " for short, became a subject of great political excitement now, when the affair had long lost all actuality and political value. Neither open confession nor denial of it could have done Germany any harm. The peace attempts were of importance only when they were in progress in the spring of 1917. They undoubtedly form an interesting chapter of the World War. They are important for an estimate of the political position at the time, of the peace intentions of the Emperor Karl, and the attitude of the then leader of our foreign policy. But the exaggeration of the importance of all the diplomatic mystifications of the spring of 1918, the assurances given by various parties, the words of honour, the explanations and counter-explanations in this long past affair, and the use made of it as propaganda against the Emperor, were a manoeuvre on the part of the Pan-German propagandists, the enemies of the Emperor, of those who were determined to prolong the War and resolved on a " victory peace." It was intended to divert attention from the real matter that had been at issue, from the peace movement undertaken by the Emperor for the sake of the welfare of the peoples of Austria. Without investigating the intention at the back of the peace efforts, the attempts at concealment made in a state of painful embarrassment, but in the last resort quite without importance, were dragged into the foreground. And this was done in such a way that the quite erroneous opinion gained general currency that the Emperor had tried to betray Germany behind his minister's back.

Since, however, the episode of the disclosure of these attempts to secure peace caused much talk, and since even now many wrong views are current on the question, I have decided, before concluding the chapter on the Emperor Karl's peace efforts of the spring of 1917, to bring the events of that time within the scope of my critical investigation.

In a speech made by Count Czernin on 2nd April, 1918, to a deputation of the Vienna Municipal Council, the following remarkable sentence occurs:

" M. Clemenceau, a little before the beginning of the offensive in the West, asked me whether I was prepared to negotiate and, if so, on what basis. I replied immediately, in agreement with Berlin, that I was prepared to negotiate, and

that, with regard to France, I could see no obstacle to peace except France's desire for Alsace-Lorraine. A reply was received from Paris that negotiation was impossible on this basis."

That was an obvious challenge to Clemenceau. Was it merely an inadvertency on the part of our Minister for Foreign Affairs? If it were not, what was Count Czernin's object? The elementary diplomatic consideration that, by disclosing negotiations in which strict secrecy had been a stipulation, we were renouncing for the future all possibility of entering upon non-binding secret preliminary discussions, was entirely overlooked by the leader of our foreign policy. The Emperor was reproached because he made no objection when the draft of this speech was submitted for his approval, that is, because he did not bring forward the letter written to his brother-in-law, of which Czernin had no knowledge.

To this it may be objected first that it will not do to confuse rôles to such an extent as to make the Emperor responsible for his Minister's speeches. Moreover, the sentences quoted above relate to the Revertera-Armand negotiations. There was, therefore, no occasion whatever for the Emperor even to think of the Sixtus affair, over and done with a year past, when he glanced through the speech.<sup>1</sup> And if the Emperor did think of it, he was quite well aware that Count Czernin was equally concerned in the attempts at *rapprochement* belonging to the spring of 1917. Above all, Count Czernin must himself have known what aim he was pursuing when, in spite of the stipulation of the strictest secrecy, he spoke openly of the discussions which had taken place between Count Revertera and Count Armand, and in a way which was bound to force from the French Prime Minister the not unjustified words: "Czernin is lying."

Count Czernin, then, if we preclude any intention of injuring the Emperor, proceeded to heap blunder on blunder.

<sup>1</sup> It was submitted to the Emperor late in the evening so that he had not the necessary time to consider the effects of this highly political speech. Next day, when he wished to stop it, as certain passages in it struck him as objectionable, it was too late. The Emperor was concerned not only about matters of foreign but also of home policy, for the speech contained a very sharp attack on the Czechs, which he considered to be extremely out of place.

First of all, he dragged to light the details of the negotiations between Revertera and Armand, and that in a one-sided statement which challenged contradiction. This was followed promptly by a retort from Clemenceau, in which the agency of Prince Sixtus was already hinted at. To stop at this warning would have been obviously the prudent thing to do, for it could be foreseen that Clemenceau, if provoked any further, would reveal the earlier secret negotiations conducted through the agency of Prince Sixtus, in which, however, Czernin himself had taken a prominent part. A private explanation to the German Government would certainly have sufficed, for the earlier negotiations had long lost all actuality. But instead of doing this, Czernin permitted an entirely superfluous new *communiqué* to be launched. The French reply was even more plain. It stated that the Emperor Karl in a letter written in his own hand, had expressed his agreement with the "just claims of France with regard to Alsace-Lorraine," and had in a second letter declared that he was "of one mind" with his Minister.<sup>1</sup> Count Czernin, who in the interval had gone to Bucharest, on 9th April, requested the Emperor, who was at Baden, to come to the Hughes station. There a conversation took place, the exact words of which were published by Count Demblin in his pamphlet, *Czernin und die Sixtus-affäre*.<sup>2</sup> In this conversation the Emperor declared that he had written no letters of a political nature to his brother-in-law. But the conversation proves nothing whatever, since the Emperor was not in a position to speak plainly at the Hughes apparatus on such a supremely delicate subject, as this conversation was carried on in the presence of two witnesses, and the Emperor did not know one of them, the official at the apparatus in Bucharest, who might have even been a German officer. But from this conversation in conjunction with subsequent events, a fact suspicious for

<sup>1</sup> There is nothing on this point in the second Imperial letter.

<sup>2</sup> Without wishing to cast doubt on the correct reporting of this Hughes conversation, I must remark that a Hughes slip cannot pass as documentary evidence, for it is only a slip of paper with mechanical writing on it, which can be very easily fabricated at any time. It can, therefore, never be used to charge anyone, even if the slip bears the written attestation of the official in charge of the Hughes apparatus showing at what time and between whom the conversation took place.

Czernin emerges. According to Demblin's account, Czernin said in the course of the conversation: "I urgently beg Your Majesty to put off the *communiqué* and telegram until to-morrow evening. I shall be in Vienna then and must speak to Your Majesty again first. I am afraid that Your Majesty must have forgotten a letter which you wrote, for otherwise Clemenceau is playing a desperate game if he is not in a position to produce the letter of which he speaks. I urgently beg you, therefore, to wait until I arrive, because we cannot afford under any circumstances to make mistakes now. Obviously it is letters to the Prince of Parma which are referred to, of the contents of which I am, of course, entirely ignorant. I shall say to Berlin at once that Clemenceau is lying, that our reply will follow, and I beg you once again not in any circumstances to do anything until I get back." The Emperor then declared that he entirely agreed. And in spite of this urgent request to postpone any *communiqué* until he had spoken to the Emperor, Czernin himself, immediately after this conversation, the doubtful value of which he must have recognized on account of the presence of witnesses, instructed the Ministry to publish a *communiqué*, in which he accused Clemenceau of lying. This *communiqué* of 10th April, 1918, was the last straw; the result was the publication of the Emperor's first letter. Count Czernin thus, after arranging with the Emperor to postpone the *communiqué*, proceeded to do the very opposite of what had been arranged. On the assumption of the genuineness of the Hughes message, which I certainly do not doubt, this action of Count Czernin makes one infer that his intention was to expose the Emperor. Quite unnecessarily he piled challenge on challenge until he successfully dragged the Emperor's letter out of Clemenceau and thus roused resentment in Germany against the Emperor. Involuntarily the question arises whether that was not the aim Czernin had in view.

When the complete text of the Emperor's first letter was published in a French *communiqué* on 12th April, Count Czernin demanded with all kinds of terrifying threats that the Emperor, who had taken a draft of the letter which had not been used for the right one, should make a written declaration on his word of honour that Clemenceau's statement was in-

correct. That Count Czernin knew of the letters at the time the Emperor wrote them seems to me improbable, that he suspected the existence of such a correspondence when Clemenceau first referred to letters of the Emperor (9th April) appears to be probable, that he knew the whole facts of the case when he made the Emperor assure him on his word of honour of the contrary, seems to be certain. Nor can there be any doubt that the Emperor in view of the published text recognized that the letter had been written not on the draft which he held to be the right one, but on another draft. At the least Count Czernin must have been struck by the Emperor's hesitating attitude towards the publication of the acknowledged and different text of the letter.<sup>1</sup> If the affair was actually as it was set forth in the Austrian *communiqué* of 12th April, 1918, how otherwise would the Emperor's struggles against the publication of his text be explained? One can make many assertions, but these have no value unless one can also make them credible. Very few could credit Count Czernin, when all the world knew that the Emperor wrote the letter in the text in which it was made public, when he said that he, Count Czernin, who was in such close touch with it all, held that the text published by Clemenceau was a forgery and the other the correct one. Count Czernin painted in the darkest colours the consequences that would ensue if the Clemenceau text were the correct one and were recognized as such. He faced the Emperor with the alternative of either authorizing the publication of the *communiqué* in which Clemenceau was given the lie or taking the frightful consequences on himself. It is said that Czernin threatened the Emperor with suicide and with the necessity for abdication. I do not assert this as a positive fact as I have no proofs; but persons who were in close touch with the Emperor have confirmed the truth of these threats. It is, however, certain that Count Czernin assured the Emperor that he required this assurance on the Emperor's word of honour only to protect himself, to keep in his own desk. Now, whatever may have been the facts of the case, Count

<sup>1</sup> In Count Demblin's pamphlet the Emperor's attitude of uncertainty is specially referred to: "The Emperor at the beginning struggled hard against the publication of his text."

Czernin, if he had been the statesman which he wished to be regarded as, must have known that *in politicis* there is and cannot be "words of honour" for a ruler, since for a ruler in the exercise of his sovereign office there is only one honour, to subordinate everything to the welfare of his people. I know of no ruler in the history of the world who held his sovereign's shield of honour so high and stainless as the Emperor Karl: he found his sovereign's honour in the fulfilment of his duty of living solely for the welfare of his people, and with perfect selflessness sacrificing to them all he was and had. To attempt to influence a sovereign *in politicis* by a personal declaration made on his word of honour is, quite apart from the presumption of it, political folly. This elementary knowledge should not be lacking in a statesman. It was not lacking in previous statesmen. This grotesque and petty "word of honour" story of Count Czernin is unique in the history of the world. We had to wait for a Count Czernin to come and make an innovation, and by its means place a dangerous weapon in the hands of the easily influenced democracy.

Moreover, the Emperor was also aware that, at the time when Count Czernin demanded with threats his signature to the declaration, which he had brought with him already written out, he was perfectly acquainted with the true state of affairs. He could, therefore, regard the written declaration as a mere formality and not a deception of Czernin. By signing it he made the supreme sacrifice to his country. For he believed in the Minister's threats, he feared to lose the last card on which he had set his hopes for the salvation of Austria-Hungary. And thus, with his signature, he handed his honour over to a man whom he knew to be his bitter enemy. But it was Count Czernin who led the cards and played the risky game. To his unfortunate policy must be ascribed the fact that all the good cards were misplayed and that the only one remaining in the Emperor's hands was following the "German course." Count Czernin by exaggerated threats made the Emperor sign this declaration, when he could no longer see clearly on account of his painful and embarrassing position and was uncertain of his course. If he had acted in good faith, it would have been his duty to return the docu-

ment to the Emperor the moment he became convinced of the incorrectness of the statements made in the declaration, recognizing that the Emperor, when he made the declaration, was not a free agent, and that by his own conduct he had contributed not a little to aggravate the position. Count Czernin, however, preserved this terrible weapon as a precious treasure, kept threatening the publication of the documents in his possession,<sup>1</sup> and did not prevent Count Wedel, the German Ambassador, from making public the contents of the declaration, and Demblin from divulging the rest of the episode, and that in an entirely one-sided account.

It may be that Count Czernin, like Shylock, was formally in the right in taking his stand on his bond. But the world will give judgment against him on an Emperor who dared and sacrificed all for the welfare of his peoples, and a Minister who could throw a stone at his Emperor and master when he was exiled and defenceless and robbed of all his dignities and possessions.

But if we wish to arrive at a correct judgment of the blame for the impossible position in which the Emperor and Czernin found themselves in the spring of 1918, we must not neglect to investigate the psychological reasons for the disagreement between the Emperor and his Minister. The reason lay in Count Czernin's behaviour to the Emperor. It was not the behaviour of a tried statesman, of a Minister to his Imperial master, but rather that of a perpetually fault-finding guardian to his ward. If the Emperor could have gone on regarding Count Czernin as an inflexible character, a statesman who had already given proofs of his ability, he would certainly have put up with a great deal and have met his Minister half-way in spite of all his distrust. But the Emperor could only regard Count Czernin as a man without previous experience of Government work, who had as yet no

<sup>1</sup> At the beginning of the year 1919 Count Czernin wrote a letter to a gentleman belonging to the suite of the exiled, defenceless monarch in which he demanded that the Emperor should sign a declaration, threatening that if this were refused he would proceed to publish documents in his possession. A copy of the required declaration was enclosed in the letter, and a very short period was allowed for signing it. The threat was referred back with a letter of refusal at the Emperor's orders. Very soon after came the "revelations" of Count Wedel and Count Demblin.



achievements to his credit, whom he, from belief in his ability, had made what he was, who presumed excessively on his position without any justification, and owing to his desultory nature showed a regrettable lack of strength and solidity. The high-handed, overbearing, militant, and, at the same time, vacillating behaviour of Count Czernin made it natural that no confidential relation could be built up between him and the Emperor. The reason why the Emperor did not dismiss him earlier was because he took account of the popularity which Czernin had contrived to win by the aid of bluff and a well-directed press, and of the position he had made for himself in Berlin and Budapest, and because he felt it to be his duty to put up with the disagreeable character of his Minister, in order to avoid political upheavals. The world took Czernin's arrogance for proper pride before the thrones of princes, his recklessness for strength, and a certain kind of political cleverness for statesmanship. The Emperor, who had been impressed by his personality at first, came all too soon to recognize his true qualities. I have described Czernin's inconsistent behaviour in the negotiations with Prince Sixtus in the spring of 1917. It was certainly not calculated to evoke the Emperor's confidence in him.

There is so much of terrible tragedy in the destiny of the Emperor Karl that anyone who can glimpse the association between the great world-shaking political movements and the conflicts there were bound to be, and were, in the soul of the Emperor, and who has not lost all susceptibility to psychical events, must be deeply moved. I can count myself among the few who, by a familiarity with his thought and his character derived from years of association with the Emperor, were able to glimpse and sympathize with the state of his mind during his reign. This makes it my duty, on the basis of the relevant documents which were accessible to me, to represent his efforts to secure peace in the spring of 1917 as one of the most important episodes of his reign, in order to show for once *le revers de la médaille*, and to correct many erroneous views which have been publicly expressed on the subject.

## CHAPTER IX

### INTERNAL CRISES

Es ist so schwer, den falschen Weg zu meiden."—GOETHE, *Faust*.

#### I

THE fate of the Monarchy was decided in the spring of 1917, not on the battlefields but in the government departments of Austria and Hungary. The Emperor's intention of setting Austria-Hungary on a new foundation, a foundation of equal national rights and autonomy, should have found expression simultaneously with his peace efforts. The Emperor was resolved on it. But of what avail was his resolution when he could find no men prepared to take constitutional responsibility for a new course? The Emperor was unable to overcome the legal relation in which he stood to his Ministers. I was not the only one who knew the stubbornness with which the Emperor Karl clung to his intention to put the Monarchy on new and modern foundations, which would enable it to survive. His responsible advisers at the time were completely aware of it. The Emperor knew that the realization of his intentions was the only thing which would have enabled the political credit of the Monarchy abroad, which had fallen almost to zero, to be built up again. He knew that only by this means could those powers in the Entente which supported the maintenance of the Hapsburg Monarchy be strengthened in their attitude, and that only by this means could the schemes of Austria's enemies working abroad be seriously interfered with. At my evening report on 17th March the Emperor gave pithy expression to this idea in the sentence: "Will none of my Ministers understand that we must take the wind out of our enemies' sails?"

At a later date also,<sup>1</sup> during a walk through the Park at Wartholz, His Majesty complained to me that he could not find one Minister who would assume the responsibility for a

<sup>1</sup> Sunday morning, 15th July, 1917.

clear, bold policy. "As the Gospel says, the children of darkness are wiser than the children of light." I must have looked puzzled, for the Emperor said: "You do not know what I mean. The children of darkness are those who think only of immediate advantage. They are clever and keep me prisoner. And the children of light, who see farther, cannot set me free. The Ministers entrench themselves behind their constitutional responsibility and I cannot circumvent them, but I know quite well that ultimately I shall have to bear the responsibility. The late Emperor Franz Joseph repeatedly impressed on me that the whole idea of ministerial responsibility is in fact only a farce. In reality we and we alone bear the responsibility. His late Majesty often told me never to forget that." I have often thought of these words and of this conversation. How right the Emperor Karl was in his conception of responsibility, and in what an inexpressibly tragic manner his words were fulfilled! He and he alone was made to feel responsibility for all the mistakes of his Ministers and advisers, for all the sins of the national leaders, and finally also for those of the nations themselves.

Internal crises in Austria and Hungary in the spring of 1917 brought the Monarchy to the point at which the ways of destiny diverged. The one way would have led, I am unalterably convinced, to the preservation of the Monarchy; the other led automatically to its destruction.

This chapter is devoted to the history of these crises.

In Austria the cry for the summoning of Parliament was becoming more and more audible in the spring of 1917, but the German parties made it a condition that the so-called "German interests" should first be realized by means of an Imperial ordinance. Count Clam was working at the problem under serious difficulties. He had not yet spoken. People were waiting patiently but full of expectation to see the direction of the first steps of the Emperor Karl's first Austrian Government. In Hungary the King was fighting a hard battle with Tisza for universal equal suffrage. The antagonism was coming to a head. The opposition were exploiting the shaky position of their hated enemy, Count Tisza, and were applying the lever for his overthrow at the same point as the Emperor Karl: frequently against their own con-

victions, they ranged themselves on the King's side on the suffrage question. Once they were in power, they would arrange the suffrage so that it should be no danger to them.

The political ideas of those in power were strongly influenced in April, 1917, by two factors, the German Emperor's Easter message, which they did not wish to be behind, and conditions in the East. Tsarist Russia was overthrown, the Tsar and Tsaritsa were prisoners, isolated from their entourage. That was a warning. But for peace, for the freeing of the Eastern front, the Revolution was favourable. Russia was apparently prepared to make peace on the basis of the *status quo ante*.<sup>1</sup>

Now occurred my first opportunity of giving the Emperor a connected account of my view of the internal political situation. To enable the reader to understand what follows, I must go back a little. As early as October, 1914, discussions on the political reorganization of Austria had begun among the German parties, instigated by a lecture on the war aims of the German Empire which was given by Dr. Clas, the President of the Pan-German Union in Mainz, in the "German Club" in the Johanniskasse in Vienna. The demands of the Germans in Austria were to have been announced after this lecture. As it was found that no clear view on this subject, much less unanimity, existed, the Old Students' Associations of the Academic Unions, the students' unions, corps, etc., set about clarifying the German-Austrian question. First of all a basis for discussion was worked out. When the draft scheme was ready, it was adopted at a meeting composed of representatives of the above-named unions and the Union of German Professors as a basis for their discussions, which were carried on in a steadily growing circle. In addition to the various German Unions, there took part in these deliberations university professors, the German Club, deputies of the Reichsrat, and later the German National Union, all the German National Councillors and organizations belonging to the States which did not as yet have any National

<sup>1</sup> This may well have been a subject of discussion at Homburg. The *Den (Day)* announced at the beginning of April that the New Russia could not accept a dishonourable peace. Russia desired to conclude peace on the basis of the *status quo ante*.

Councillors. Thus was the origin of the "Easter list of demands" reproduced in manuscript at Easter, 1915. The demands included the introduction of German as the State language, the settlement of national conditions in Bohemia on the basis of a division into administrative districts in the State and autonomous administration, revision of the standing orders of the Lower House, revision of the constitutional relations and a long-term settlement of economic relations with Hungary, the replacement of the defensive treaty with the German Empire by an offensive and defensive treaty, the conclusion of a military agreement and the economic and customs union with the German Empire, the securing of the outlet to the Adriatic and the Aegean, and free right of shipping on the lower Danube. In addition to the "Easter list of demands," the German National Union also drew up a programme which was identical with the "demands" on all important points. This programme contained the declaration of the Party that they intended to carry out the reforms by extra-Parliamentary methods, that is, by means of an Imperial Ordinance (*Okroi*).

When the Government programme of Count Clam, issued on 21st December, 1916, was found to contain the words: "the restoration of constitutional order, the establishment of the necessary preliminary conditions therefor, and clearing of the way for the summoning of Parliament, will be the chief aim of the Government," the Orders under § 14,<sup>1</sup> by which the Germans desired to realize their demands, were curtly represented as the "preliminary conditions" for the summoning of Parliament. The Clam Ministry had worked out the necessary draft Orders. On 11th April, 1917—I had gone to Marburg to meet the Emperor, who was returning from the south-western Front—I had to report on some of these Orders, those relating to the introduction of German as the language of commerce, and to the division of Bohemia into administrative districts, during the railway journey.

I had made an exhaustive study of the drafts, and explained them to the Emperor, paragraph by paragraph, at the same time pointing out the interconnection and correlation of the various provisions. But even before I had completed my re-

<sup>1</sup> The issue of these Orders under § 14 would have been unconstitutional.

port, the Emperor had given emphatic expression to his opposition to any violation of the Constitution. He had, it was true, not taken the oath to the Constitution, but he had too high an idea of his duties, even those he had not sworn an oath to fulfil, to set them aside in favour of one race alone. The Emperor on this occasion spoke very decidedly against the application of § 14 to any cases for which it was not intended. The much-disputed, much-sought-after § 14 might, he said, be very convenient for the Governments of the moment in their ever-recurring parliamentary crises. But the existence of this clause was frequently to blame for the fact that the Ministers did not see any necessity to solve the problems which gave rise to these crises. There was always the possibility of avoiding the solution of inconvenient problems by the boggy way of § 14. "They have been put off again and again by means of the convenient § 14. Now I have them all on my hands," said the Emperor. He was in favour, he said, of removing the ominous § 14 from the Constitution. So long as it existed, or rather so long as it was shamefully exploited in this fashion, there could be no question of a Constitution in Austria.

The Emperor displayed great understanding of the question of national autonomy, and showed himself quite familiar with the ways of carrying it out. Finally, he asked me for my views on the political situation. I took the opportunity of explaining at length how dangerous it was, especially now, when the people were looking for clear and definite aims, to work merely by negations. The rejection of the Imperial ordinance demanded by the Germans was a negation which would merely proclaim that the rehabilitation of Austria was impossible in this way. People would then quite rightly ask how the Government proposed to set about rehabilitation. The Government should not fail to have a clear and definite programme. It would be foolish to believe that, after the War, the nationalities would permit themselves to be oppressed by a majority—by the Magyars in Hungary and by the Germans in Austria; it would be equally foolish to believe that the Germans in Bohemia would look on quietly while the Czechs drove them to the wall. It was to the supreme interest of the Government to snatch from the Entente powers

their trump card, the championship of the "little nations"; preparations must be made for the coming peace negotiations; the wind must be taken from the sails of the enemy propaganda. For reasons both of home and foreign policy, timely announcement must not only be made of the intention to grant national autonomy within the limits drawn by the interests of the whole State; expression must also be given to the will of Parliament to carry out a revision of constitutional and administrative rights on these lines. To draw up a detailed programme would be dangerous, because, in view of the wide divergence of national demands, such a programme would evoke the dissatisfaction and, therefore, also the opposition of all the national parties. The aim at which the Government was striving must be indicated only in broad outline, in a few brief sentences. This aim was national autonomy within the framework of the State as a whole. If the Austrian Reichsrat adopted an attitude of obstinate rejection to this programme, it would in all probability ease the way for positive work on those lines if prolongation of their mandates were made conditional on a declaration on the lines of these principles, and, in the contrary case, if a reform of electoral law, in favour of proportional representation, were announced. This would result in the repression of the bourgeois element, the supporters of national chauvinism, by the social element.

I also pointed out that for the Austrian Government to take up the position of guaranteeing national autonomy would hit the present regime in Hungary in its most sensitive spot; but I also remarked that a thorough acquaintance with the political position in Hungary would considerably reduce the fear inspired by Hungary, which was largely fear of the unknown. I expressly emphasized the fact that the nationalities question in Hungary could never be solved if we came to a halt at the Leitha.<sup>1</sup> The great problems were to be solved only by the abolition of historical State rights, and by giving validity to national rights in Austria as well as in Hungary. In Hungary the introduction of universal, equal, and secret suffrage was the first step, which must be taken in all circumstances. But matters must not be left there, for this

<sup>1</sup> The boundary between Austria and Hungary. (Translators' note.)

would merely win over the nationalities; in conjunction with electoral reform, agrarian reform, fiscal reforms (including a sharply progressive land tax), and administrative reforms must be undertaken. The unfortunate experiences we had had under former Governments, especially the Coalition Government, should, however, be an example and a warning. Repeated watering down and weakening of universal suffrage would compromise the Crown with the people past all hope of redress. A bungling policy of half-measures would make the nationalities despair of ever being freed from intolerable conditions. There was no lack of suitable personages in Hungary.

The report on the reorganization of Austria which I made to the Emperor on that occasion, on the journey from Marburg to Vienna, lasted several hours. It began at 10.15 a.m., was interrupted for half an hour and resumed after lunch.<sup>1</sup> To begin with, the Emperor put various questions to me, but later he allowed me to make my statement without interruption. He listened to my report with breathless attention. When I had finished, he instructed me to submit the draft of a manifesto which should express these ideas in a concise and formal manner, without, of course, reflecting on Hungary in any way. He concluded the audience with the words: "The programme you have evolved is your programme, it is entirely in harmony with my intentions and no one has hitherto spoken to me on those lines." I replied: "Nothing was further from my thoughts than to derive any advantage for myself from being first with an idea. That was not my intention at all. Your Majesty was gracious enough to ask me for my views on the political situation, and I was merely doing my duty in giving expression to my convictions. Moreover, what I have said is not my idea, but merely a synopsis of ideas which have been earlier and better expressed by other people. The only new thing is that I am the first of those who affirm Austria who has had the opportunity to submit to the supreme authority what I and many of like mind with me recognize to be right." The Emperor then instructed me to go to Count Clam and say to him that the Imperial ordinance for the Orders would have to be stopped and the Reichsrat sum-

<sup>1</sup> From 10.15 to 12.20 a.m. and from 2 to 2.40 p.m.



moned without it. Finally the Emperor once again told me to submit the draft of a manifesto.

Immediately after my arrival at Laxenburg, I sent Count Clam word that I would call on him in the afternoon, and proceeded to Vienna. When I gave him the Emperor's message, Count Clam did not appear surprised at the turn of events. He might have expected it. He had more than once heard the Emperor express his dislike for Imperial ordinances in favour of one single nation. I imagine also that Count Czernin, under the influence of events in Russia, had already warned him against dangerous interruptions of constitutional continuity, so he was of one mind with myself so far as the negative part, rejection of the Imperial ordinance, was concerned. In the course of the conversation, I sketched my ideas on the internal political situation in broad outlines. When I came to the connection between our national questions and those of Hungary, and discussed what action should be taken in Hungary, Count Clam observed that this had been the programme of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand. I replied that I did not know this,<sup>1</sup> but had arrived at this result in consequence of my own observations and my study of the Hungarian problem. In reply to Count Clam's remark that even if the idea were objectively right the nationalities in Hungary were for the most part at a lower stage of cultural development, and that any extension of their rights would be a dangerous experiment, I replied that one had in every case to choose the lesser of two evils. The greater evil certainly was to leave their development to themselves or to the enemy. From my conversation with Count Clam I got the feeling that he was honestly concerned with the business in hand, and that the peculiarity, so often to be observed among statesmen, of turning down other people's ideas merely because they are not their own, was alien to his character, and that he, being concerned only for the welfare of Austria, would gladly accept help from any quarter.

On 14th April, on the Emperor's return from a one day's stay at Budapest, I submitted to him at the evening report my

<sup>1</sup> It was only later, when His Majesty gave me a dossier on the subject to study, that I became acquainted with the programme drawn up in preparation for the Archduke's accession to the Throne.

draft of the manifesto which was to give expression to the Emperor's resolution to deal justly with all his peoples, to set Austria on its natural, because its firmest foundations, and to guarantee national autonomy within the limits drawn by the interests of the State as a whole. The manifesto also contained a passage in which the Reichsrat was summoned to take up its constitutional activities, and exhorted to co-operate in the reorganization of the Monarchy. When I submitted the draft, I observed that in the manifesto, since it did not create facts, only one aim was displayed. It did not interfere with existing rights; the constitutional way was also adhered to. All that belonged to future movements. The ground would be cut from beneath the feet of the enemies of the Monarchy and at the same time of the republican-democratic elements, of whose emergence after the War there could be no doubt. I also briefly repeated my autonomy programme. I got the impression that the Emperor had already discussed the question with Count Clam, and had come up against opposition from him, as the responsible head of the Government. Nor had I any doubt that Count Czernin had also taken the liberty of saying a decisive word. The manifesto was dropped, which I regretted very much. The Emperor, like me, was of the opinion that the realization, even the proclamation of national autonomy, would deprive the Entente powers of their trump card, pity for and desire to champion the little nations.

A manifesto did appear, however, immediately before the Revolution; but it came too late, because it was forced by events. The Ministers did not make up their minds to issue a manifesto until a time when it could only hasten the break-up of the Monarchy. At the period when, in conjunction with the Emperor's strivings for peace, it might have proved a blessing and our salvation, obstacles were put in the way.

On the 15th May, on the return journey from Trient, whither His Majesty and his suite had gone on 14th May, the Emperor once more returned to the autonomy programme, and said that doubts of its practicability were generally felt; he had met with the greatest difficulties in trying to convince the Ministers of the value of the idea. I once again explained at some length the programme and my ideas

of the way in which it could be carried out. I again emphasized the fact that the Slavs could be won over to co-operation only if announcement were made of a clear intention to bring the Yugoslav question to a solution on the one hand, and, on the other, gradually to abolish dualism and to see that the principle of national autonomy prevailed in the other half of the Monarchy too. A proclamation to this effect must go hand in hand with a complete change in the political course in Hungary; only in this way would it be possible to win the degree of political power necessary to realize the idea. The Emperor listened quietly to my report, which I made in the evening as the train travelled on, and made no remarks on the subject after I finished. Next morning he sent for me and instructed me to ring up Count Clam immediately and tell him that he must insert a passage dealing with national autonomy in the Speech from the Throne. I carried out these orders at the first station at which the Court train made a considerable stop. Count Clam replied that this would upset his draft entirely; he would have to speak with His Majesty personally. I had no longer any further doubt that the idea was meeting with the stubborn opposition of the Government. However, as I clung firmly to my conviction that national autonomy was the direction in which political development would in any case proceed, I explained to the Emperor how necessary it was that the question should be at least exhaustively studied by the Government. It might come about that a reform of the Monarchy on the lines of the granting of national autonomy would become a necessity and that a future Ministry would identify itself with the idea. Preparations must be made for this eventuality, so that the then Government might not be caught napping at the moment the question came into the political programme. The best plan would be for the question to be worked out by experts in the Cabinet Office. A commission or a department should be set up for the purpose. The Emperor agreed, and instructed me to discuss the question in detail with Clam. I replied that I was only in a position to discuss the broad principles of the programme with Count Clam, and that the working out of it in detail must be handed over to an expert commission appointed for the purpose. I then worked out the principles of

a programme. I must lay stress on the fact that I was concerned only with a basis of discussion for an *ad hoc* expert commission. In accordance with the Emperor's instructions, I discussed the principles of my programme with the Prime Minister. Count Clam invited me to dinner on the 19th May, on which occasion a brother of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Count Paul Czernin, who had been assigned to the Cabinet Office, was also present. After dinner I explained the programme. A discussion ensued, from which I saw that Count Clam was fundamentally hostile to the idea because he considered it impracticable, but that he regarded the principles I proposed as suitable in the unlikely event of our ever coming to closer quarters with the idea. For working out the programme, I suggested to him Freiherr Professor Alexander von Hold of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

The Speech from the Throne with which the Emperor opened the Reichsrat on 31st May, 1917, fell within the narrow limits imposed by constitutional obligations in the interpretation of the responsible Ministry. It emphasized, it is true, the necessity for constitutional reform, but indicated the direction the reform was to take about as clearly as the Delphic oracles. The Emperor expressed his confidence that the Reichsrat in conjunction with the Throne would create the necessary preliminary conditions "in order, within the framework of the unity of the State, and with its functions assured, to guarantee the free, national, and cultural development of nations possessing equal rights."

This concession which the responsible Ministry made to the Emperor's views was truly pitiable. It was hardly more than a meaningless phrase. I deplored the absence of the proclamation of national self-government. The Government declaration of the Prime Minister was also flagrantly disproportionate to the behests of the time. Count Clam said that his programme was "Austria." A fine phrase, truly, but merely a platitude for an Austrian Prime Minister. The phrase would have acquired substance only if Count Clam had added the definite ideas he had in mind for the maintenance and consolidation of that "Austria."

The Government persisted in passive resistance to the question of national autonomy. I petitioned the Emperor

once again, and begged him to order the Government to have the question investigated by experts. The best way would be to establish a department for constitutional reform in the Cabinet Office and entrust its direction to the aforementioned Professor Freiherr von Hold. The Emperor gave the order. The department was established. Freiherr von Hold, who had to get leave for the purpose from the Foreign Minister, told me that Count Czernin at first refused to give him leave, because if he did so he would be reproached with having had a hand in the game. He wanted to avoid this; he was overburdened already, and now he would be associated with this unfortunate idea of the head of the Emperor's Private Office. Finally, his opposition to the establishment of the department for the revision of the Constitution was broken by the express and repeated orders of the Emperor. The department carried out its task brilliantly. The question was solved, not only in principle but in detail, all the necessary Bills were drafted, in short the Government were armed so that they could come out at any time with a programme. But the condition necessary for success was lacking, the winning over of the nationalities in Hungary by the introduction of universal, secret suffrage simultaneously with the announcement of fiscal, agrarian, and administrative reforms. The ostensible power of Tisza blocked the way. People did not see how insignificant the power of the uncrowned king would have proved in face of a great, popular programme of reform, if the crowned king had dared to make it his own.

Then the Government delayed, came up against the inevitable opposition of the Czechs and Jugoslavs in the preliminary negotiations, and refused to come out with the autonomy programme. But I do not wish to anticipate events. The autonomy programme, against the Emperor's will, was dropped under the Clam Government. The only thing I saved from the wreck was the establishment of the Department for the Reform of the Constitution. But I regarded it as my task to resurrect the programme at the proper moment.

By the middle of June, 1917, the Clam Cabinet was almost moribund. The "Austria" programme remained a hollow sham. The echo of the phrase had died away, and action had not followed. Count Clam had shilly-shallied over the fulfil-

ment of the so-called "German interests," and, finally, they were dropped owing to the determination of the Emperor to rule according to the Constitution. This put the Germans out of temper. The Czechs, Jugoslavs, and Ruthenians took up a position of opposition from political principle, and so the attitude of the Poles became of decisive importance for the voting of the Budget, and, ultimately, for the fate of the Cabinet. The Poles exploited the situation and made such exorbitant demands, that Count Clam found himself compelled first to resign and then to attempt to transform the Cabinet into a Ministry of nationalities. I got the impression that this attempt failed not so much from the party leaders' lack of confidence in the idea, but from their lack of confidence in the Prime Minister himself. Count Clam was hampered with the reputation of a Bohemian feudal lord, a convinced adherent of Bohemian State rights; whether this reputation was deserved or not does not matter, the fact alone counted: as Prime Minister, he had disappointed those who were his natural adherents, and he had not won over the Germans. They were friendly, but suspiciously expectant so long as there was any hope of his carrying out the German demands by means of an *Okroi*. When these hopes were disappointed, all confidence from the German side was at an end. Finally, it was intrigues of a personal kind which—most of all, perhaps—aggravated the already difficult position of Count Clam and brought about his downfall. On the evening of 21st June, immediately after Deputy Dr. Korošec had had an audience with the Emperor, the resignation of the Clam Cabinet was announced.

I looked on it as a serious symptom of the mortal disease of our country when the political waves closed over Count Clam, and I had to acknowledge that the Austrian idea had no longer any great power of attraction. I do not, naturally, wish to criticize a man who was overthrown by his honourable Austrian convictions, but I believe that he could have kept his position if he had given a new and powerful content to his "Austrian" programme; in the last resort it was only the revival of the old Austrian idea.

On 23rd June the former head of the Ministry of Agriculture, Dr. Ritter von Seidler, was provisionally appointed

Prime Minister, with the task of getting the Budget through Parliament. I had no share in this appointment. The Emperor did discuss with me the question who should take over after Clam, but the discussion did not lead to any final decision. I was amazed when Ritter von Seidler came up to me in the House, where I had business, and asked if he might have a few words with me in private. He opened the conversation by saying: "Well, what do you think of this?" I did not know what he meant until he told me that he had been appointed Prime Minister. I had to keep up my dignity as the Emperor's private secretary and pretend to have known, but I considered that Seidler's appointment was not important, as the arrangement was only provisional. At this first conversation with the newly-appointed Prime Minister, I pointed out to him that he must be on his guard against the dilettanteism of Count Czernin, which I had already had ample opportunity to recognize. Seidler, however, paid no attention to my warning. At the very beginning of his Government, he had to reply to an interpellation by Deputy Dadzynski. I was in the gallery of the House at the time, and could hardly believe my ears when Seidler based his reply on the Article in the Fundamental Laws which deals with the Emperor's right to declare war and conclude peace. To cram that Article down the throat of the Lower House was to show complete ignorance of Parliamentary psychology. A storm of indignation arose. Dadzynski and some social-democrats replied in most trenchant fashion. A few days later Seidler told me that he was only the "postman" for Czernin's views; this passage in the answer to the interpellation had been cooked in Czernin's kitchen.

In order not to depart too far from chronological order, I must insert a certain incident at this point. In May, 1917, on the occasion of one of my evening reports at Laxenburg, the Emperor gave me a thick bundle of papers, remarking that it contained the programme of the late heir-apparent. The Emperor was of opinion that the whole thing was out of date, and inapplicable in a state of war. Nevertheless, it was possible that it contained things which were still of value. He asked me to study the documents and report on them in the near future. The dossier had reached the Emperor only a few hours previously; it had been among the papers of

Colonel von Brosch, late head of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand's Military Chancery, who had fallen in battle. I set about studying the documents that same day, but was disappointed to find nothing but a programme drawn up by Colonel von Brosch in preparation for the change of Monarchs, and some very interesting jottings on the subject. I was overcome by a feeling of lost opportunities. In a fit of temper I wrote in pencil on the cover of the dossier the words, "Too late." On one of the following days I was making a report to the Emperor. I dealt first with the current business, and after I had reported on the final item, the Emperor noticed the dossier in my portfolio and the words pencilled on it. He asked me what they meant. I requested him to let me report first, which would make the meaning of the words self-evident. I then gave him a brief summary of the programme drawn up by Brosch for the Archduke's accession to the Throne. When I had finished His Majesty briefly remarked: "The matter is very interesting, but it has no significance for me. I have taken my coronation oath and I will keep it as long as I live." He never afterwards said a single word about the programme and the ideas of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand.

## II

In the interval events of decisive importance had been taking place in Hungary too, some of which go back some distance. News of stormy incidents in the Hungarian Parliament and of demonstrations in favour of electoral reform had reached Vienna. Parliament had been adjourned. When the Emperor discussed these occurrences with me, I pointed out the connection between a change of course in Austria and the granting of universal suffrage in Hungary. Next day, the 12th of April, 1917, the evening before his departure for Budapest, I submitted the following *promemoria* to the Emperor:

"In order to check any effective electoral reform, the Hungarian politicians will attempt to raise objections on



the ground that electoral reform would give the nationalities too great influence, and that there are far too many untrustworthy elements (irredentists) among them.

"Proceedings for high treason have recently been instituted, against the Rumanians in particular, in order to give these objections a foundation.

"Tisza has also repeatedly referred to the excellent treatment of the nationalities in Hungary and ascribed their patriotic conduct during the war to this cause.

"In time of peace the political leaders of Hungary pursued the following plan: in Hungary they accused the nationalities of being greater Austrians, of dependence on Vienna; in Vienna, however, they charged them with irredentist sentiments. A subtle double game. The truth is that the nationalities, just because they suffer so terribly from the oppression of the Budapest Government, have long looked to Vienna for their salvation.

"They waited long in vain; and then, it is true, some time ago, discontent began to drive many of them into the irredentist camp. The emergence of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, who gave them hope again, resulted in their recovering their spirit. If the great majority have been loyal during the war, it was due not at all to Magyar policy, but entirely to the fact that they hoped for the fulfilment of their aspirations by the dynasty if they acted loyally in the war. Now all their hopes are set on Your Majesty.

"If Your Majesty has pity on them, they will at once become enthusiastic supporters of the Crown. But if nothing is done for them, in their deep disappointment and embitterment, they will become the enemies of the Monarchy. There is no time to be lost.

"It would be a mistake to believe that universal suffrage by itself will abolish the Magyar domination, for this domination rests on economic and social foundations. It will merely mitigate it, to the advantage of all the peoples of Austria and to that of the dynasty. The 'vital interests' of the Hungarian State will in no way be menaced by it. It is always in the power of the Government at the elections to procure an overwhelming majority for the Magyars."

Still no definite crisis occurred in Hungary. The Emperor tried quietly to discover the chances of a combination, in order to secure a firm support against Tisza. "Count Tisza will not give up power," said the Emperor to me. "He always eludes me if he sees that his stubborn opposition on the suffrage question may at any moment lead to a crisis. He withdraws a pace, but very soon comes back to his old standpoint." The Emperor's efforts were now directed towards bringing about the downfall of the Tisza regime and the amendment of the electoral laws without, if possible, any internal upheaval. For this purpose a combination seemed the most suitable means. Proceedings in the Hungarian Parliament at that time showed clearly that almost the whole of the Opposition were supporting universal, equal, and secret suffrage, agrarian reform, and an up-to-date economic and social policy, that is, things which would ultimately lead to the negation of their own power. On the subject of the reasons for this strange phenomenon, a Hungarian politician wrote a letter to Vienna in the spring of 1917, which—by whom I do not know—was submitted to the Emperor, and by him shown to me. It read as follows:

"I can tell you from personal experience that the Magnates—I have spoken with many of them quite privately on the subject—are, after their experiences of the men on leave, in a state of panic fear about the return of the armies, and are quite convinced that the soldiers, if they find that present conditions still exist after the conclusion of peace, will make a revolution of the worst kind, and that an anarchical demagoguery will then tear down all barriers. And—this is the most interesting point—this fear has also mastered all thinking people in the Government party. Count Stefan Tisza alone 'consoles' himself with the idea that if this is so a strong hand is all the more necessary. But I, who have not only many connections with the Work Party but have also an exact knowledge of its political *psyche*, can tell you quite definitely that this consolation appeals to very few indeed: the Magnates quite rightly point out that, even if Tisza's hand is strong, the whole administrative system in the Province is weak and incap-

able of withstanding opposition. In this connection there is extraordinary interest in the speeches which have come from the Government side in the present debate, and which, in spite of party discipline, permit one to read between the lines exactly the same demands for a more social policy, a new economic policy, etc., as is clearly expressed in the speeches of the Opposition."

It was obvious that if a combination came into being, this new political trend which was evident in the proceedings of the Hungarian Parliament would become the Government policy. Count Johann Zichy, a member of the Work Party, had taken the first step towards combination by announcing in a newspaper that he and the great majority of the Work Party would not be averse from a combination. The entire Opposition and the non-party members immediately placed themselves at his disposal. Prominent politicians announced their readiness to take part in or support a Zichy Coalition Cabinet.

In the event of a combination the policy of State rights would have receded into the background, as was the case with the Coalition Government, because the opposition between the Forty-Eighters and the Sixty-Seveners would naturally have lost its influence.<sup>1</sup> That would have been a great advantage. But at the very outset, the differences between the Opposition and the Government were so exacerbated by the attempts to find a platform for the combination that the chances of a combination receded further and further and finally disappeared altogether. Count Tisza had won a victory over the Opposition, but also over the Crown, which had desired a combination, in order to ensure the constitutional way in the future in the event of the resignation of Count Tisza with his opposition to electoral reform. The Emperor was then

<sup>1</sup> This opposition was one of the most effective means for reinforcing and advancing the oligarchical interests. If these were endangered, a question of State rights was immediately brought forward, the Forty-Eighters had to line up and a concession in the matter of State rights was extorted. This was a well-tried expedient. Therefore, after the downfall of the Coalition Government, Count Tisza hastened to revive this opposition. It is known that he bought with Government money the votes he needed from a part of the Forty-Eighters, that is, the Opposition.

thrown back again on Tisza, whose tottering position he was, in the absence of any prospect of another majority Government, obliged to strengthen by sending him a holograph letter. This holograph letter could not have altogether satisfied Count Tisza's desires, for it contained an order to submit to the Emperor by return of post suitable proposals in which the grateful recognition of the King "finds expression in a comprehensive system of economic institutions and an extension of the suffrage, in harmony with the greatness of the times and the sacrifices of the population." The holograph letter thus in substance took the Opposition point of view. It began the Emperor's new struggle for universal suffrage against Tisza's stubborn opposition. Tisza ran the whole gamut to convince the Emperor of the mischief that would be caused by an extension of the electorate. Among his other efforts he submitted a memorandum in which he pointed out the injurious effects which universal suffrage had had on the educational level of the Austrian Lower House. Cultural conditions were most deplorable, he said, in the most powerful races, the German and the Bohemian; since only those could be elected who did not scorn "the pernicious methods of radical demagoguery." The Emperor handed me this memorandum and instructed me to prepare a reply to it. A few days later when I gave him the reply, which was certainly not difficult to compose, His Majesty told me that it was now unnecessary as Count Tisza could not remain Prime Minister any longer.

At the time at which the opposition between the Emperor and his Hungarian Prime Minister was at its height, an incident occurred which may have had a decisive influence on the Emperor's resolution to withdraw publicly from Count Tisza the confidence which he had long ago withdrawn from him in his own mind.

On the evening of 10th May, 1917, when I came to report after an audience which the Emperor had given to the then common Minister of Finance, Freiherr von Burian, His Majesty greeted me with the following words: "Who do you think has expressed himself in favour of universal suffrage and taken up my standpoint against Tisza?" I replied: "If Baron Burian had not just left Your Majesty's study I should

certainly not have thought of him; moreover, this can only be a welcome indication of a similar change of heart in other of Tisza's supporters. As Baron Burian always forms his opinions on a solid basis, the point of view he, as a connoisseur of Hungarian conditions, adopts on the suffrage question would assuredly be deserving of the greatest attention." The Emperor confirmed the correctness of my surmise, but said nothing further of the conclusions to be drawn from Burian's attitude. I still do not know, therefore, whether the journey of the common Finance Minister to Budapest, which followed immediately, was connected with this, or whether he undertook the journey as a kind of *homo regius*, or what, if any, influence Baron Burian had on Tisza's overthrow, which occurred directly after.

At my evening report on 21st May, before his departure for Hungary, the Emperor informed me that Tisza had resigned and that he intended to accept the resignation. He could not be clear about the position of affairs in Hungary until he had spoken to the chief Hungarian authorities; but the unnatural state of things, in which he was fighting on the side of the Opposition against the obstinacy of the Prime Minister on the electoral question, must be ended.

The Imperial couple proceeded to Gyöngyös, where a fire had reduced the town practically to ashes. During the journey the official acceptance of Tisza's resignation took place.

When the Emperor got back to Laxenburg from Hungary, a code telegram had already arrived from Tisza, in which he announced that the Work Party, that is, the majority in the Hungarian Reichstag, had, in a session specially convened for the purpose, approved his position in the suffrage question by a unanimous vote. In view of this state of affairs, he was not in a position, with regard to the solution of the Government crisis, to give the final advice which a retiring Hungarian Prime Minister was used by old custom to give the Crown. In spite of this Count Tisza nominated two candidates, if I remember rightly, Count Johann Zichy and Wekerle.

I very soon received valuable information about the political situation which had been created in Hungary by Tisza's resignation, and I supplemented it by inquiries of my own,

which I set on foot immediately. I learned from various quarters that the proceedings at the session at which a unanimous vote in support of Count Tisza was alleged to have been passed by the National Work Party, which would have been an open insult to the Emperor, had not been quite as described by Tisza in his code telegram. The session had had to be packed with officials of the Ministries and the Municipal Council, and the vote had not been unanimous. The official *communiqué* issued on the subject agreed with the reports I had received, as I have already said, from various sources. It spoke, it is true, of a unanimous vote, but at the same time observed that, in spite of this vote, a break-off of about a hundred members was possible.

On 25th May, 1917, the Emperor and Empress went for the Whitsuntide holidays to Reichenau, where the Emperor received the President of the House of Magnates, Freiherr von Josika, as well as Count Johann Zichy and Wekerle. With regard to the last of these, the Emperor expressed himself in very unfavourable terms before the audience. He said he would find it very difficult to appoint Wekerle as Hungarian Prime Minister. The story went that Wekerle, at the time of the reform of the marriage laws, had misled the Crown about the state of feeling in the country by the production of forged newspapers. His reputation of telling the reverse of the truth on principle gave rise to the following story. One day when the Emperor Franz Joseph had received him in audience, the Emperor asked him whether it was raining. On Wekerle's answering in the affirmative, the Emperor went to the window, looked out and said: "You have made a mistake, Wekerle. It really is raining."

His Majesty went on to relate another story which the Emperor Franz Joseph used to tell about Wekerle. One day the grave of Attila was discovered in some Hungarian comitat or other. It was suggested to Dr. Wekerle, the Prime Minister, that it would be very flattering to Hungarian national patriotism if the King were to visit this newly-discovered grave, and perform a symbolic action there. Dr. Wekerle submitted this request to the Emperor Franz Joseph, who consented to make the visit. On the way to Attila's grave the Emperor remarked: "I remember quite clearly that some

years ago a tomb was discovered in another comitat which was said to be that of Attila. Now, my dear Wekerle, which of these is the real tomb of Attila, the one previously discovered or the one to which we are now going?" Wekerle casually replied: "As Your Majesty pleases."

After the audience the Emperor discussed the Hungarian Government crisis during a walk in Reichenau Park. I observed that this was one of the turning points in Hungarian policy. Everything depended on whether the Crown could succeed in wresting the supreme power from the leading Hungarian politicians and taking it into its own hands. A beginning had been made by the Crown's decision in favour of universal suffrage, and by the overthrow of one of the most powerful leaders in Hungary. Count Tisza, however, still disposed of a majority in the Hungarian Reichstag, so that the new Prime Minister, unless there was a secession from the National Work Party, would be dependent on the favour or disfavour of the retired Prime Minister. That would mean a fight of the majority against the Crown, which, *rebus stantibus*, could only result in the defeat and compromising of the Crown. Things must, therefore, be so arranged as to avoid a struggle of this kind. The position could not be retrieved merely by a single impulsive action such as the clear, decided, and open attitude of the Crown towards universal suffrage, but would call for subsequent continuous Government measures in a definite direction.

Next day I submitted a memorandum to the Emperor in which I made the following recommendations:

"The appointment of a *homo regius* and interim prime minister, possibly Teleszky, the Minister of Finance, who is the senior in rank and the least exposed to attack; to be followed by the invitation of Magyars and non-Magyars to an audience, thus freeing the King from the prerogative wrongly assumed by the Hungarian prime minister of barring the sovereign's door to all but Magyars. It is only natural for the King to desire to become acquainted with the wishes of all the races of Hungary. Previously the wishes of peoples who form half the population of Hungary have never been heard.

"It would thus be possible to invite to audience, besides the Hungarian parliamentarians and politicians of the Work Party and the Opposition, the leaders of the nationalities, Dr. Alexander von Vajda, deputy and leader of the Rumanians, Milan Hodža, the ex-Parliamentary leader of the Slovaks, Rudolf Brantsch, Deputy Jakob Waldner or another social-democratic leader, Stefan Szabó, the deputy of the Peasants' Party, etc. Since the constitutional way should be chosen for the solution of the problem, the best method would be to attract men belonging to those groups which had seceded from the Government Party on account of Tisza's electoral reforms.

"A suitable man for the post of Prime Minister would perhaps be Dr. Alexander Erdélyi jun.

"The Government programme should be laid down as soon as possible in terms admitting of no ambiguity.

1. Introduction of universal, equal and secret suffrage.
2. Agrarian reform.
3. Taxation reform (progressive land tax).
4. Administrative reform.

"The suffrage will immediately transform ten millions of the population into unqualified supporters of the Crown. By the announcement of agrarian, fiscal and administrative reforms the lower strata of the Magyar population will be won over. In the event of serious difficulties in Parliament, its dissolution and a decree ordering new elections in the shortest possible time should be kept in mind. At the same time untrustworthy elements in the ministries and the administration should be eliminated and replaced by suitable men. The Press, which, always in financial difficulties, is dependent on subventions from the Government in power, and, therefore, always ready to conclude a pact with every Government, must be worked upon, and, finally, His Majesty must issue an order to the Church dignitaries of all persuasions that they must support the new Cabinet. They will all obey, with the exception of the Calvinists, of whom Tisza disposes. The new elections must be carried out on the old electoral law and the old electoral districts. This promises a certain victory for the Government, since,



out of 430 seats, it will win 300 without a struggle (non-Magyar nationalities, peasants). Tisza's electoral law was sanctioned four years ago. On the pretext that its practical enforcement had to be postponed on account of technical measures not yet decided on, for four years all by-elections have been carried out by Tisza on the old law and the old electoral districts. This would result in both promoting and silencing constitutional agitation. Public audiences granted to non-Magyars would in itself have a sobering effect on the sticklers for State rights and the swashbucklers. Their agitation could be reduced to a minimum, even entirely paralysed, if His Majesty, on the nomination of the Prime Minister, appointed a minister without portfolio for every nationality.

"The object of this measure would be:

1. To ensure at the elections a strong nationalities party devoted to the Government and to His Majesty.
2. To weaken and disintegrate the State rights movement among the Magyar peasants and bourgeoisie by fraternizations (festivals, national assembly, etc.).
3. To strengthen the position of the representatives of Austria-Hungary at the Peace Congress by facilitating the solution of the Serbian and Rumanian problems.
4. The solution of the nationalities question and of the relation of the two States of the Monarchy to each other in accordance with the intentions of the Crown.
5. Solidarity of the Monarchy with regard to war aims and its relations to its allies for the purpose of guaranteeing its autarchy.
6. Securing the prerogatives of the Crown.

"As these ministers would secure access to their ruler for all nationalities, their dynastic loyalty could be revived at a stroke. These nations would be firmly united to their ruler without amendment of the Constitution. By co-operation with Magyars and non-Magyars His Majesty would lay solid foundations for an agreement of his peoples in Hungary."

On the day of his return from Reichenau, the 31st May,

the day of the Speech from the Throne, the Emperor made a brief reference to the Hungarian Government crisis and instructed me to summon Dr. Alexander Erdély junior, whom I had mentioned in my memorandum, to Laxenburg, but to arrange things in such a way that the audience should remain a secret. The best plan would be for Erdély to come to me, and for the audience to take place in the Laxenburg Park at a spot agreed upon. I replied that it would certainly be a good thing for His Majesty to make Dr. Erdély's acquaintance, but that it was advisable that a *homo regius* and interim Prime Minister, Teleszky, should be appointed, to be followed by audiences to Magyars and non-Magyars. The question who should ultimately be appointed Prime Minister could only be decided by aid of the impressions gained at these audiences. The Emperor, however, felt that he must first meet Erdély and discuss with him the further course of events. That same evening my instructions were countermanded on the grounds that the Emperor had received unfavourable reports about Erdély, and could not, therefore, make up his mind to take this step. I asked what the reports consisted of and what was alleged against Erdély. I expressed my readiness to provide detailed reports to draw the sting of these slanders—for they certainly could be nothing but slanders. I made inquiries, which, of course, showed the complete lack of foundation of the allegations made against Erdély, and proved that he enjoyed the highest reputation, both as member of Parliament, advocate, and private citizen. But in the interval events developed differently from my hopes. Count Moritz Esterházy became Hungarian Prime Minister. I found it quite understandable that the Emperor attached little importance to my advice on Hungarian affairs. He heard from me, and only from me, the exact opposite of what all the Hungarian gentlemen in his entourage whose opinion he asked reported and advised. But these gentlemen had either no judgment in political questions or represented the one-sided point of view of the official Hungarian policy, which was daily becoming farther removed from reality and from the true conditions and tendencies in Hungary. My advice had referred only to the way which should have been taken. I knew that, so long as the power of the leading poli-

ticians in Hungary remained unbroken, they would try every means in their power to drag out the suffrage question by all sorts of manœuvres, and would finally compromise the Crown beyond redemption, not only with the other nationalities but also with the great majority of the Magyars. But I also knew that the continuation of these intrigues, heedless of the fact that the solution of the Hungarian problem was every day becoming more urgent for reasons both of home and foreign policy, was bound more and more to dim the lustre of the Crown, and ruin Hungary. I thought of Goethe's line:

“It is so hard to avoid the wrong road.”

At the fateful cross-roads, the Emperor, badly advised, took the wrong turning. He remained dependent on Tisza and soon fell into the hands of Wekerle, who, by the power of his own position and by the power of the Parliamentary majority borrowed from Tisza, played the most foolhardy political conjuring tricks, until finally he gambled away to Károlyi the sacred Crown entrusted to his care.

## CHAPTER X

### THE POLITICAL AMNESTY OF 2ND JULY, 1917

"The policy of hate and retaliation, bred by obscure relations, which unleashed the world war, must, after it is over, everywhere and under all circumstances be replaced by a policy of conciliation."—THE EMPEROR KARL's holograph letter of 2nd July, 1917.

#### I

NONE of the Emperor Karl's measures, perhaps, evoked so much agitation and such uncomprehending amazement as the Amnesty for political offences committed during the War, which was proclaimed in the Imperial holograph letter of 2nd July, 1917. The explanation for this is to be found in the fact that his responsible advisers, in spite of the counter-signature of the responsible Prime Minister, not only did not publicly support but actually obstructed this measure, which seemed to be outside the lines of the policy being pursued at the time. Public support of this act of grace both from the judicial and the political standpoint would have checked the rank growth of false impressions and erroneous opinions, and would certainly have transformed the harmful effects which the Amnesty had on the political atmosphere into beneficial effects.

During the last weeks of the Clam Government, Parliament was working without leadership and without direction. It was spending its strength in explanations and heated discussion of all the military sentences which belonged to the period which lacked both Parliament and criticism, and which in part had already been put into execution. The deputies must be given due credit for dragging to light all the details of the trials in their unbiassed and justified indignation with military justice, for the most part regardless of their national party affiliations. All who had the chance of making even a cursory review of this material were rendered speechless, and

anyone who discussed these military sentences with members of Parliament and civil servants in May, 1917, was overcome by depression and deep anxiety whether we should succeed, without public scandal, in setting aside the wrongs dating from the period of unrestricted military absolutism, which so seriously incriminated the State and the responsible authorities.

The mysterious suicide of a chief of section in the Ministry of Justice, Dr. Schober, a judicial official, who was particularly distinguished for his conscientiousness, sense of law, and correct sentiments, was connected by his former colleagues with the excesses of the military judicial authorities. He had been reduced to a state of despair and finally melancholia, which drove him to death, by the impossibility of putting an end to all the hair-raising violations of law in which he was officially involved.

The Emperor since his accession had been interested in the question of an amnesty for the Czech politicians. He recognized from the very outset that the military courts had been guilty of fatal mistakes which were bound to have the most pernicious political consequences, unless the way were cleared for a policy favourable to the Monarchy by means of a revision of the trials, and, if necessary, an amnesty for the prisoners. He again and again discussed the question of an amnesty with Ministers and members of Parliament. When he received the party leaders on 21st May, 1917, in order to form a judgment on the political situation by getting into personal touch with them, he also sent for certain prominent Czech politicians, including Staněk and Smeral. The conversation touched on the trials for high treason, both those already concluded and those still pending. The evidence they submitted impressed the Emperor, who promised them that there should be an investigation, and, should it appear desirable, an amnesty for the prisoners.

In the interval I had collected a great deal of interesting material about the persecution of the Czechs by the military judicial authorities. Among other things, a memorandum had been sent to me which quoted a series of cases from which shocking persecution of the Czechs could be inferred. My brother, whose work in the Anthroposophist Society brought

him into active touch with members of all camps of political and public life in Bohemia, told me that a friend of his, Dr. Jaroslav Klima, head of the Vinohrady Police Commissariat at Prague, could furnish me with interesting material about the activities of the military courts. I made inquiries about Dr. Klima, with whose name I had long been familiar from my work in the Ministry of the Interior. As I received unanimous reports from all quarters to the effect that Dr. Klima was one of the most efficient and reliable police officials in Bohemia, I invited him to come to see me at Laxenburg. He came a few days later, and in the course of a lengthy conversation told me he had been for twelve years in the Bohemian State Police Service, and gave me a clear and concise picture of political conditions, party relationships, and recent events in Prague. He afforded me a glimpse behind the official scenes. By means of innumerable concrete instances he proved to me with what passionate animosity the military courts had persecuted the Czechs. The civil government was practically powerless to do anything. It was making the temper of the Czechs worse day by day and breeding radicalism, which was increasing to an alarming extent. To my question how it came about that he was no longer in the State police service, Dr. Klima at first returned an evasive reply. When I insisted, he said that the Vinohrady Police Commissariat was the best in Prague and that he was quite contented. A casual remark that it was connected with the Kramář case roused my curiosity. After I had asked him about it several times, he told me the following story. He had been summoned as a witness in the Kramář case. Immediately before the hearing, the Public Prosecutor, Dr. Preminger, called on him and said to him in a meaning tone: "Well, you will be delivering the speech of a candidate for the post of Director of Police in Prague." He had, however, given true evidence. The result followed very quickly: a telephonic order from the Army Command at Teschen removed him from the State police service on the grounds that he had given evidence of such a kind in the Kramář case that he was no longer fit to remain in the State police. As, however, he possessed first-class qualifications, he was appointed head of the best police commission in Prague. This conver-

sation was of great service to me: it cast quite a new light on Bohemian affairs.

Dr. Klima spoke with equal candour of the great danger of a secession of the Czechs, and of the methods by which such a secession could still be checked. He described the conditions very calmly, confirming every opinion with concrete facts and drawing the conclusions with spirit. As a Bohemian, he was melancholy, and, as an Austrian official, indignant over the reckless way in which violence was being done to right and justice, and over the short-sightedness of the Government. Dr. Klima's statements, from the clearness and candour with which they were made, left a lasting impression on my mind. They strengthened the judgment I had already formed of the Kramář trial, and made prudence and careful attention seem called for in similar trials for high treason. The events that followed confirmed the correctness of all Dr. Klima said to me in May, 1917. Many years after the Revolution I had an opportunity to discuss the episode with him in retrospect. On account of his extraordinary ability, Dr. Klima, who was an outstanding figure not only as an official, but also as a man, and was held in high esteem by all who came in contact with him, was always employed in the most delicate and dangerous political posts; the last was that of Director of Police in Bratislava (Pressburg), where he succumbed to a severe illness and died, universally regretted, in the year 1927.

On 1st June, 1917, immediately after an audience granted to Minister Freiherr von Trnka, the Emperor sent for me, and gave me the following instructions: "Go to the Landwehr Divisional Court, study all the documents there relating to the Czech trials for high treason, both those already disposed of and those still pending, and let me have a report on the subject." I objected that the study of these very voluminous documents would take a long time, and asked whether I might have the assistance of a criminal court magistrate, but the Emperor replied: "No, you must perform this task yourself. I shall, however, instruct the Minister of National Defence to give you the necessary assistance at the Landwehr Divisional Court." The Emperor observed in passing that the Private Office, by means of the appointment of technical

experts, should be organized in such a way as to be in a position to give provisional information such as was often called for at a moment's notice on technical questions of the most varied character without calling in outside assistance. He would expect proposals on this subject from me. I consulted the chief of section in the Private Office, and submitted to the Emperor a proposal that no change be made in the organization of the office. The calling-in of technically qualified officials would give the public the impression that an extension of the Private Office was contemplated which would make it an irresponsible supervisory department, which might involve unpleasant political consequences. The Emperor agreed with my objections; he was usually ready to change his ideas, which were often formed on impulse, if the objections to them were put before him in a clear and unbiassed form.

I applied to the Minister for National Defence, Freiherr von Georgi, who had all the papers relating to the trials placed at my disposal at the Landwehr Divisional Court. The judge-advocates who had conducted or were still conducting the criminal proceedings were also present when I got to the Divisional Court. I begged the judge-advocates, in view of the overwhelming mass of documents, to confine themselves to the discussion of positive offences committed after the outbreak of War, as, by the text of the relevant Imperial Order, the military courts were competent only for such offences. The advocates, who impressed me as men of unbiassed mind and thorough masters of the material, were embarrassed, but observed that the construction of "permanent offences" was under consideration, and that, with regard to competence, they had had their line of march laid out by the Higher Court. When I asked one of them privately whether he had arrived at all the results on the basis of his convictions as a magistrate, he laughed and said: "Convictions as a magistrate? If we had dared to express them in any other form than that acceptable to the Army Command, we should have been done for." I made shorthand notes of the information supplied by the judge-advocates. I worked for two days and two nights in order to master the voluminous bills of indictment and the sentences.



When I had finished I went to Vorarlberg on 4th June with Prince Conrad Hohenlohe and the Master of the Empress's Household, Count Alexander Esterházy, to meet the Emperor and Empress. I reported to His Majesty on the return journey. The Emperor confined me at first to reading aloud my shorthand notes. When he put a question, I gave him the desired information from the bills of indictment and sentences. The report, which lasted for several hours, was continually interrupted by the many scenes of enthusiastic welcome staged for the Emperor and Empress during this journey through Vorarlberg and the Tyrol. The train passed through almost unbroken lines of people, who stood on both sides of the railway line and cheered the Imperial couple. They waved handkerchiefs and black and yellow flags they had brought with them, and sang the national anthems. It was certainly not the proper background for mild emotions towards Czech traitors. But there was no question of anything like that. The Emperor wished to be clear about how far political prejudice had been the deciding factor in these trials. The question of competence was also discussed. In this connection the Emperor remarked that the verdict on Kramář and his associates was given at the order of the Army Command; this, of course, could no longer be proved, since an order of that kind would hardly have been committed to writing. We also discussed the evidence given by the various statesmen in the Kramář trial. The Emperor stressed the fact that they included my brother-in-law, Marquis Bacquehem, certainly a shrewd politician and an experienced statesman, who had given evidence in favour of Kramář. At the end of my report on this question, I reported on other subjects, without the Emperor's having given any expression of his intentions in the matter of the high treason cases. So much for the events leading up to the Amnesty.

I did not learn of the Emperor's decision to proclaim the Amnesty until after it had been taken. On the afternoon of 29th June the then Prime Minister, Ritter von Seidler, came into my office at Laxenburg, after the meeting of the Crown Council, and an audience with His Majesty which followed the meeting, and said to me: "What do you think? The Emperor is granting the Amnesty." That was the first time

I heard of it. Ritter von Seidler explained to me the serious harm that had been done to the Parliamentary situation by the politically-biassed proceedings of the military courts, and the impossibility of ever arriving at a tolerable political settlement without an amnesty. I regarded the Amnesty as the beginning of a new move towards national reconciliation in Austria, and welcomed the decision, but I expressly stressed the fact that this measure could only be of political value if it were the first step in a new direction. The Prime Minister, who had assumed his difficult office only a few days before, regarded it in the main merely as an alleviation of his own political position. But this was a great mistake, as the Amnesty merely smoothed his, in any case, thorny way through the negotiations in committee on the military courts, while it made his political position with regard to the German parties considerably more difficult.

That same evening, when I arrived to make my report, the Emperor informed me of his decision. He spoke of the 17th August as the day on which the Amnesty would be announced, and added: "*Justitia regnorum fundamentum*. Such shocking sentences have been passed that I cannot do anything else. It may be that there were traitors, but the trials were conducted with bias. Everything was not proved. I cannot expose the military courts and the army to the scandal which would arise if the cases were dragged into the light and revised, which has already been proposed." The Emperor then asked me to give my views on the coming Amnesty. "But wait," he added, "until Her Majesty comes. I want her to hear your views. Her Majesty does not share my opinion about the Amnesty."<sup>1</sup> I proceeded to deal with other current business until Her Majesty entered the room. At their reiterated request I began my statement on the Amnesty question. I first mentioned that I had already heard of the decision from the Prime Minister, so that my conscience would not be burdened with giving public expres-

<sup>1</sup> At a later date Her Majesty told me that she was opposed to the Amnesty because she was afraid that this act of grace would be inadequately supported, and that it might involve criticism unfavourable to the Emperor. The Army Command should, therefore, she thought, have been calmly sacrificed and the matter settled by Parliament.

sion to my views on such an important matter of high politics without sufficient consideration. I discussed first the juridical aspect of the question. One of the chief points to be taken into consideration was that the legality of the military courts had been denied by Parliament. This point had recently been exhaustively discussed in my presence by Count Clam and the then Minister for Justice, Freiherr von Schenk. It seemed to me at least doubtful whether the sentences and admissible actions had any legal basis at all. It was, however, certain that the public, both through the press and the debates in Parliament, had learned of military sentences which were a mockery of justice. Moreover, we had to deal not only with Czech traitors but with many hundreds of persons of other nationalities who were not condemned by a judicial sentence, but had rather been sacrificed to the caprice of a prejudiced military justice. To separate the wheat from the chaff was extraordinarily difficult; the cases must be revised where the sentences had not already been executed. That could not happen without the exposure of the military courts. With regard to the condemned Czech politicians, high treason could not be regarded as proved. One of our chief judges, a German, had told me that he had been unable to discover any proof of the existence of an offence justifying the sentence passed in the Kramář case. At this point the Emperor interrupted me. "This complete lack of proof gives me no peace. It rests with me either to permit a possible injustice to persist or to abolish it; have I any choice?" I went on: "The amnesty of the Czech deputies would, moreover, stamp the general amnesty as a political act; but we cannot leave out of consideration the fact that it is just these cases, especially if they are legally untenable, that give most fuel to the enemy propaganda against us. As far as we can, we must cut the ground from beneath the feet of the enemies of our country working abroad. For Masaryk and his confederates, the Amnesty and a movement for national reconciliation following on it would be more than an unpleasant surprise; it would throw them out of their reckoning altogether." I laid emphasis, however, on the fact that the Amnesty would be comprehensible only if it were clearly recognized as the first step in a new direction; that depended

on the support of the Prime Minister. The new direction would be, as I again and again explained, towards a policy aiming at equal State rights for the nations, with the guarantee of national autonomy both in the lands and territories represented in the Reichsrat and in Hungary.

From the Emperor's replies<sup>1</sup> I perceived that he had weighed the pros and cons carefully, and had discussed the question of the Amnesty thoroughly with politicians of various parties. He expressly stated that he set no hopes on gratitude but on the fact that with the Amnesty a beginning could be made towards steering policy in a direction in harmony with national wishes. "I know," the Emperor went on, "that everything comes back to the necessity of cutting the ground from beneath the feet of the elements hostile to us abroad, and of taking the wind from the sails of the Entente by an autonomy policy on a large scale." Finally, he remarked that Count Czernin was opposed to the idea, that is, he was doubtful of its practicability. But nothing could be done by doubts and objections; therefore, he did not intend to inform Count Czernin about the Amnesty beforehand. It was, in any case, a matter of internal policy, and the Prime Minister had declared his willingness to carry it through without Czernin's knowledge.

From my acquaintance with the circumstances under which the Emperor Karl proclaimed the Amnesty, unaffected by all the slanders against him, I always regarded it, and naturally still regard it to-day, as a well thought out, just, and above all, necessary measure. During the evening of 30th June, 1917, which had certainly a share in deciding the Emperor to proclaim it, I was a witness of the high seriousness with which a prince like the Emperor Karl performed his great duties, and of the moral loftiness with which he set the sanctity of justice above everything else. People tried to explain and "excuse" the Amnesty by the Emperor's deficient understanding of great political questions, and his excessive benevolence and clemency. But all that is wrong, mere foolish talk. I am one of the few witnesses, perhaps the only one, who ever gained an insight into the Emperor's most intimate mind. I

<sup>1</sup> I did not note down the Emperor's words on this occasion, so that I am able only to give the gist of his remarks, as shown in my notes.

know how thoroughly, I might almost say how systematically, he weighed the pros and cons of the Amnesty, how he wrestled with all the objections which automatically arose out of the question, and how he finally worked his way to a standpoint from which he not only regarded the protection of justice as his highest duty, but from which a view was opened to him of former errors in Austrian policy, and of the only right way to national reconciliation, the goal of the Hapsburg mission. It was in this spirit that the Emperor Karl proclaimed the Amnesty. It finds expression in his holograph letter of 2nd July, 1917.

Of the correctness of the Emperor's amnesty policy, I received full proof much later, long after the Revolution. One day in 1921 I met the Lutheran bishop, Dr. Samuel Zoch, who had been Zupan at Pressburg for a short time, and afterwards lived at Modern, where my estate was situated. He came across the street to me, and asked me to call on him next day, as he had something to tell me which he was sure would interest me very much. When I called next day, he told me that he had had an interesting conversation with President Masaryk on the occasion of the President's last visit to Pressburg. Masaryk had spoken of me very unpleasantly. I replied that this was an honour to me as an Old Austrian and a Monarchist. Zoch laughed and said that at least it should be a great satisfaction to me. It appeared that Masaryk regarded me as one of the inspirers of the Amnesty. This had, he said, undoubtedly benefited many of his countrymen, and to this extent he had welcomed it. But when he had read the holograph letter, he had been filled with consternation. He had worked very successfully against the Monarchy abroad, and had met with great sympathy and understanding. The day the Amnesty was announced, he felt that the ground had been cut from beneath his feet. If the political course announced in the Amnesty, so Dr. Masaryk said, had been persisted in, it might easily have happened that the Czechs would have been cheated of their successes abroad, and it was very questionable whether they would ever have succeeded in establishing a Czechoslovak republic. The Amnesty thus hit the Czech policy of high treason very neatly on its Achilles' heel.

How pitiful and petty, on the other hand, was the "policy" of those who could not see further than their noses, and who, in order to ensure a transient military success, wanted to put behind bars everyone who seemed to them even suspicious, quite untroubled by the fact that they were thus poisoning the temper of the peoples of the Monarchy, making high treason appear more and more a national duty, and weakening the foundations of the Hapsburg Empire. Hence it happened that, though we won many battles, we lost the War. The fact is that it was not successes on the field, but failures in politics, that were the deciding factor in the final issue. We won battles, because at the Front, in our old army, the Austrian idea was still firmly anchored. We lost the War, because in home politics the spirit of disintegration pursued its deadly work.

## II

On the day following my report, the Emperor started in great state in the morning on his visit to the South German Courts at Munich and Stuttgart. The question who should definitely take over the office of Premier after Seidler's provisional Government, was then occupying the chief place in all our minds, and formed a subject of discussion even during the journeys. I discussed it with Prince Konrad Hohenlohe. We went one by one through the list of possible candidates for the post. Many had to be eliminated out of consideration for Count Czernin, while other tried statesmen were hampered by their political past, so that in the end only a very limited choice was left. After a thorough discussion of all the circumstances which had to be taken into account in a choice, we agreed that Deputy Dr. Josef Redlich, in spite of the violent antagonism between him and the Pan-Germans, possessed great suitability for the position of Austrian Prime Minister. It seemed to us to be of paramount importance that Professor Redlich had always taken a moderate, statesmanlike attitude from the national point of view, that he enjoyed an international reputation as an expert in the domain of modern administration, and that he possessed valuable

foreign connections and a valuable knowledge of foreign affairs. His linguistic gifts, his outstanding oratorical powers, and his acquaintance with parliamentary routine, all helped to turn the scale. We finally agreed to propose him to the Emperor as a candidate.

With Count Czernin I had always been on very formal terms. It was rarely that I had any business with him. When I became head of the Private Office and paid my formal call on him, he made the unreasonable request that I should inform him whenever the Emperor received political personages in audience; it was necessary, he said, for the responsible Government to be informed on this point. I explained that I could not do this without an order from the Emperor, and proposed that he should induce the Emperor to give the order, which once given I should of course obey punctiliously. Naturally nothing came of this. Since my formal call, though I had seen Count Czernin often, I had very seldom spoken to him. I was amazed, therefore, when he came up to me during this journey, and asked me to follow him to his compartment, as he wanted to discuss politics with me. He began by explaining to me that the political situation was extraordinarily serious, not only abroad but at home. "Everything is at stake," he said with great emphasis. I had long been aware of it, and could only acquiesce in this correct view. With regard to national questions, there was, in his opinion, no other way to solve this question than by guaranteeing national autonomy. As the Emperor had told me that Czernin was the man who only a short time before had fought my autonomy programme and defeated it, I was not a little surprised at this change of heart, and also at the way in which he read me an instructive lecture on national autonomy, as if I were quite ignorant of the subject; but I was sincerely glad to be of the same opinion as he was on this vital question. I replied that he was battering against open doors in explaining to me the necessity for guaranteeing national autonomy. I observed that it was no longer a question of deciding whether national autonomy should or should not be granted, but of recognizing that this would be forced upon us in any case. If we missed the opportunity of influencing the course of events, which was still possible, national autonomy would be secured

by revolutionary methods. Czernin then asked me whether I believed in the possibility of bringing the Austrian Reichsrat by autumn to a point at which it would declare its firm resolution to carry out a reorganization of Austria on the basis of national autonomy. He would need such a declaration by autumn. I replied that this question could not be answered off-hand. Success depended on whether we were ready to make up our minds to take up an unequivocal position on two questions. One of these was the Yugoslav problem. The more definitely we let our intention to solve this question be understood, the more should we advance the solution of the Austrian problem, and the nearer should we come to peace. "That is extraordinarily interesting," said Count Czernin. "I shall call Hohenlohe so that he may hear your views too." But Hohenlohe could not be found, and we continued the conversation alone. I said that the second question was whether we were prepared to find a footing for the idea of national autonomy in Hungary too. Politics in Hungary must, even without this, take a different course with the first step towards a solution of the Yugoslav question. Everything depended on this; in no other way could the Czechs and the Yugoslavs be won over. Count Czernin then clutched his head and cried out in alarm: "For God's sake, let us not stir up a blaze in Hungary." I replied that in my opinion fear of Hungary was based on a most mistaken estimate of the state of affairs in Hungary. It was a fear of the unknown. But it was all useless. Count Czernin was not to be moved on this point, and our conversation came to an end.

Something now happened which I think from the sequence of events can be traced back directly to Czernin's decision. I was still under the influence of my conversation with Czernin, and especially of the alarm and fear which he had so obviously displayed of the first stage of the decisive operation on the Monarchy, that is, of an attack on the Magyar pretensions to power, when the Emperor sent for me, and in the presence of the Empress, who was sitting in the background reading a book, said to me: "I have a *question de conscience* to put to you. Would you take over the office of Austrian Prime Minister on the basis of the programme you have repeatedly outlined to me, and do you think that you could win



over Parliament to this new course?<sup>1</sup> I can assure you that I would be very sorry to lose you; I had, moreover, intended, in case of your acceptance, to fill the post of head of the Private Office only provisionally and to keep it open for you. I repeat, it is a *question de conscience* I am putting to you."

I was still so strongly convinced that the co-operation of Count Czernin could not be counted upon for a strong solution of the problem, difficult enough in itself, in the two most important points, the Yugoslav and Hungarian questions, that in the circumstances I felt it would be impossible for me to guarantee a successful issue. The Hungarian crisis had only recently been settled against my representations and opinions by wrong advice given to the Emperor, so that he remained as before the prisoner of Count Tisza, who disposed of the majority in Parliament; I could not count on Czernin's co-operation; in fact I must be prepared for his counter-intrigues; Berlin was politically quite incorrectly informed about Austrian affairs. Therefore, it seemed to me that the necessary conditions for accepting the Emperor's invitation to become Prime Minister of Austria were absent. I refused, explaining that I did not personally feel equal to the task, and that I thought I could be of more use to him as head of the Private Office. Such a complete change of course, if we turned the sharp corner, would arouse a great storm; the Austrian Prime Minister would not be able to withstand it if the Foreign Minister and the Hungarian Prime Minister were not of one mind with him, and did not unite with him to form, as it were, an indivisible and unshakable trinity. If this were not so I could not guarantee success. I must confess that I later reproached myself bitterly for having, when the Emperor put this *question de conscience* to me, given way to the weight of the obstacles to the realization of my programme (the method of settling the Hungarian crisis and Count Czernin's attitude), and for not having at least made an attempt to overcome it. My refusal was also influenced by a clear recognition of the limits of my physical and mental powers of resistance. I also confidently believed that the man would appear who would discharge the task of creat-

<sup>1</sup> It was the same question that Count Czernin had asked me a little earlier.

ing the necessary conditions for carrying out the programme better than I could have done. I mentioned Professor Redlich to the Emperor, saying that I was convinced that he possessed the necessary qualifications if he could be won over to the autonomy programme, as I had good reason to imagine he could be won.

### III

The envoys of the King of Bavaria met us at Salzburg. At a little before six p.m., the Court train drew into the station at Munich, where King Ludwig and Queen Marie Therese and all the princes of the Royal House then in Munich were awaiting to welcome Their Majesties. The Emperor Karl, accompanied by the King, with his marshal's baton in his hand, reviewed the company of the Royal Foot Guards, which was drawn up on the station steps. The party then drove to the Palace by the Karlplatz, the Maximilianplatz, the Briennerstrasse, and the Residenzstrasse. The town was gaily decorated. Flags waved and cheers echoed from every crowded balcony and window, and both sides of the route were lined with enormous crowds, which hailed the King and Queen and their Imperial guests with shouts of welcome. The Crown Prince's Second Infantry Regiment was stationed in the "Kaiserhof" and the rest of the Household at the foot of the Imperial stairway to receive us. A bodyguard of the "Hartschiere," in their magnificent historic uniforms lined both sides of the staircase. The princesses of the royal house had assembled to meet us in the throne room of the Hofgartenbau.

I had a long talk with the gentlemen of our Embassy. Count Brusselle, a secretary of legation, who had been my friend from youthful days, complained to me that the Embassy lacked any political direction. He followed with interest but also with anxiety, internal political events in Austria, but for the moment he could not discern any clear principles at all. I replied that it was extraordinarily difficult for the Emperor successfully to carry out his peace policy abroad and the policy of reconciliation between the nations

at home, and that I was not at liberty to say anything more. After dinner, which began at nine and finished at half-past nine, a reception took place, at which the King sent for me and began a political conversation, which lasted nearly half an hour. He spoke first of the history of the relations between Bavaria and Austria. Originally the two countries had been one. In the course of time they had been torn apart, and now they were actually separated by the frontiers of an Empire. This was an unnatural state of affairs. I behaved as if I had not heard the political undertone in the King's last remarks, and made some observations on the historical reflections which preceded them. But the King persisted, and said several times that "we belonged together," and that Bavaria was a "Danube country." That was obvious. I replied that the sympathy which Austria felt for Bavaria and for South Germany in general assuredly did not depend only on our alliance, but was rooted in similarity of national character. But Austria was not in a position to draw any practical conclusions from this. Great historical events alone could bring us together again. The king agreed with me cordially, and said I had understood him very well. Finally, he drew my attention to the motto of the Order of St. Michael, the Grand Cross of which he had conferred on me, *Quis ut Deus?* Providence alone could make everything right.

At 11 p.m. we set off again and spent the night in the train. We arrived in Stuttgart at nine next morning (1st July). The King and Queen of Württemberg were at the station to welcome the Imperial couple. Their reception in Stuttgart was also enthusiastic. Lunch was served in the White Hall at half-past twelve, and was followed by a reception. Our train left at three o'clock. As we were entering the train, I was called to the telephone to speak to the Prime Minister, Ritter von Seidler, who asked me to inform the Emperor that, in view of the negotiations in Committee on the Military Courts fixed for next day, the Amnesty should be announced immediately. I informed His Majesty, who was somewhat surprised, but, after making me repeat the message, and considering for a little while, said: "Well, if the Prime Minister takes this view, for Heaven's sake prepare

the draft of the holograph letter. 'Tell Seidler to come to Baden early to-morrow with the Minister of Justice.' The Emperor then gave me instructions about the contents of the holograph letter. The victory on the Isonzo and the Crown Prince's name-day were to be mentioned as the outward occasion of its announcement. The Emperor impressed upon me that the holograph letter must state that this act of grace was the beginning of a new course in politics. I drafted the introduction and conclusion of the letter during the journey, without of course, encroaching on the legal part, which came within the province of the Minister of Justice. In the evening after dinner, the Emperor made me read my draft aloud. He entirely approved of it, in fact he was so pleased with the form in which I had given expression to his purpose of reconciling the nations that he called Her Majesty and asked me to read the draft aloud once more.<sup>1</sup> The question of counter-signing then came up for discussion, and I remarked that, although the Constitution did not require the counter-signature of a responsible Minister for an act of grace, in this case, however, since both the act of grace itself and the words of the holograph letter were of a political nature, the counter-signature of the Prime Minister was absolutely necessary. I also said that I must emphasize the fact that the holograph letter which I had composed according to instructions could only be regarded as a provisional draft, and that the text must be submitted to the Prime Minister for his advice. When we arrived in Baden next morning, 2nd July, 1917, the Emperor summoned the Prime Minister, the Minister of Justice, and Klemann, the Judge-Advocate General, to his office, and conferred with them for more than an hour. The parts of the holograph letter I had drafted remained unaltered by the Emperor's order. On the conclusion of the conference, to which I was not invited, I received instructions to have a fair copy made of the holograph letter. The Emperor signed it, and Seidler countersigned. On the afternoon of 2nd July it was read by Seidler in the Judicial Committee, the chairman of

<sup>1</sup> Soon after the commencement of the Amnesty, the Empress Zita happened to speak of it on the occasion of an audience she had given to Count Georg Wallis. She said that she had been against it to start with, but that after reading the holograph letter, she understood it.

which, the German deputy Waldner, after the reading, spoke enthusiastically of the magnanimity of the Emperor. But the Pan-Germans, with considerable help from the German Ambassador, Count Wedel, soon started an extraordinary game of intrigue, which was intended to check the extension of the movement for national reconciliation initiated by the Amnesty, and which actually did succeed in checking it.

For long people tried to discover the political author of the Amnesty. They are still looking for him even to-day—in vain. The decision to grant it was not inspired from any quarter in particular; there was no need for this. It was a natural result of an investigation of the trials and of the political situation at the time. The decision was taken on 29th June, 1917, by the Emperor in agreement with his responsible Prime Minister or by the Prime Minister with the approval of the Emperor, without their being subject to any special influence, and was put into effect, at Seidler's instigation, on 2nd July, 1917. Previous discussions and negotiations with Austrian politicians had made the necessity for this Government measure clear. Seidler had explained again and again that Parliamentary activity was unthinkable without an amnesty. It was for long incomprehensible to me how it was possible in a constitutionally governed State for a Government measure taken under the aegis of a responsible Prime Minister to be regarded as the act of a "collateral Government." It is true that I was informed in many quarters that Ritter von Seidler had protested to German politicians his innocence in the matter of the Amnesty; but I could never believe it, as such a statement would not have been in accordance with the facts, and because I could not admit that an Austrian Prime Minister would himself depreciate the value of his signature to a State document of such supreme political importance. In the course of the period during which I was abused for my supposed spiritual authorship of the Amnesty, I came to see clearly why an irresponsible author was sought for a public measure of the responsible Government. It was desired to hit the Emperor in condemning the Amnesty. The Amnesty clearly could not be agreeable to the Pan-Germans and the leading politicians of Hungary. The new political orientation announced by it

seemed to them dangerous, and so they tried all expedients to fight it from the very outset. Count Czernin, who condemned the Amnesty *a priori*, without any impartial investigation of its value or lack of value, because he had not been informed that it was to be granted, proved a welcome assistant in the struggle. He even made irresponsible advisers responsible for the Amnesty, because he preferred to dub as acts of a collateral Government measures which did not originate with himself, or which were not at least taken with his approval. Count Czernin handed in his resignation, but it did not lead to a serious crisis. He protested his innocence to the world, mercilessly criticized the Emperor's act of grace, which was published under the aegis of the responsible Minister, and himself coined the catchwords with which the thoughtless and shallow condemned the Amnesty. These catchwords found ready acceptance among the unthinking populace, especially as the Prime Minister made no stand against them and irresponsibly omitted to give any explanation of, or support to, the Amnesty. Count Czernin played an easy game; he took up his pose, and by embellishing his bold criticism of the Amnesty with the myth of backstairs politics, he gained in prestige in proportion as he took from the prestige of the Emperor, which it should have been his duty to protect against all attacks.

As no one supported the Amnesty, it became the defenceless victim of arbitrary interpretations. It is positively amazing how lightly it was judged and how thoughtlessly it was condemned. Count Czernin heard of the Amnesty when he was entertaining Hindenburg and Ludendorff at his house. The then German Military Plenipotentiary with the Supreme Army Command, General von Cramon, describes the scene in his book, *Unser österreichisch-ungarischer Bundesgenosse im Weltkrieg*, in the following words: "We were enjoying ourselves very much [*sic!*], when Count Czernin was called to the telephone. After a little, he came back, looking visibly upset. The Emperor Karl, he told us, had signed an Amnesty for political offences, which included the condemned Czech leaders. The result of his announcement was general consternation. We wondered who could have persuaded the Emperor to take this step, glanced at Dr. von Seidler and

Polzer, the Emperor's chief private secretary, but came to no conclusion." This account shows that Count Czernin, losing sight of his duty to protect the Emperor, at once exposed the news to the criticism of our German allies. It was quite natural that the Amnesty should at first be incomprehensible to them, but I cannot believe that this was true of the leader of our foreign policy. General von Cramon adds a criticism of the measure to his description of the first impression which the report of the Imperial act of grace made on the guests at Hetzendorf. There is something in itself a little surprising about a Prussian general's passing judgment on Austrian political problems over which distinguished statesmen had racked their brains for years. Had Herr von Cramon taken the trouble to study the trials in question? If he had not done so, as there is every reason to suppose, then he had no data on which to base anything but a completely valueless and superficial verdict on those trials. It is, however, possible that General von Cramon held other views on the sanctity of justice than are usual in constitutional States. If this is the case, I will not dispute the question with him. Even the principle of "Might before right" has its adherents. But they, if they wish to be logical and to be taken seriously, must also admit the justice of, for example, the death sentences of a proletarian dictatorship. But if Herr von Cramon wished the arguments which he adduces against the Amnesty to be understood from a political and not a legal point of view, I would ask him whether he seriously believed that the secession of the Czechs at home and the desertion to the enemy of Czech troops on the field could have been stopped by putting a few Czech deputies behind prison bars? Were the gentlemen in Berlin, although there no amnesty was granted, able to prevent Alsatian troops from betraying Germany and deserting to the enemy? And there were as many deserters, often whole units, from the German as from the Austrian army. Prussian generals and statesmen, in view of the harm which their stubborn and short-sighted policy inflicted not only on the German nation, but also on its ally, had no right to criticize the policy of Austrian statesmen.

Positively amazing, however, is the following sentence of General von Cramon about the Amnesty: "The road was

open, it led the Czechs as victors to Saint Germain." Does not Herr von Cramon know that the "victorious destiny" of the Czechs was decided not in Bohemia, but abroad, by Masaryk, Beneš, etc.? Does he not know that we did them the best possible service by poisoning the temper of the Slavs and depriving them of all interest in the continued existence of the Monarchy with our senseless persecutions? It was not the Amnesty, but those senseless persecutions of which the Slavs were the defenceless victims during the War at the hands of military courts officered by the Supreme Army Command, the ruthlessness with which the aspirations and interests of all nations but the Germans and the Magyars were pushed out of the way, the establishment of the Kingdom of Poland by the Imperial Patent of 5th November, 1916, which was done at the instigation of Berlin with the sole purpose of raising recruits in the newly created "Kingdom," the obstinate determination on a "victory peace" of the chief German leaders, which afforded ever fresh fuel to the destructive intentions of the "victory peace" party in the Entente, the complete failure to recognize the effects of submarine warfare, into which Germany had bullied us, the truly amazing failure to understand the danger which threatened us from the United States, it was all these that finally brought the Czechs as "victors to Saint Germain." In comparison with these great causes which determined the frightful fate of the Central Powers, with these serious errors for which not the Emperor Karl but his opponents are to blame, the political Amnesty of July, 1917, is bound to appear of very small significance.

The Amnesty was entirely the result of the illegal and politically prejudiced verdicts of the military courts which preceded it. It was caused by the very men who condemned it most severely. I admit it was a two-edged sword. One had to reckon and did reckon on its causing dissatisfaction to the Germans, who were inadequately informed on the untenability of the military trials. Those who condemned the Amnesty for this reason should have remembered Schiller's words: "It is the curse of the evil deed that it must go on giving birth to fresh evil." The unimportance of the Amnesty itself would have been realized, and it would have proved



a blessing, if it had been understood as the Emperor wished it to be understood, merely as the first step in a new direction. For the fact that it was not so understood and did not succeed, that, even when well thought out and well weighed, it was degraded in the eyes of the public to the level of a thoughtless undergraduate's prank, the chief blame rests with Count Czernin, who, either out of consideration for, or fear of, Berlin and Budapest, made himself an obstacle to any strong solution of the Austrian problem.

Herr von Cramon states that he has been unable to find any other explanation for the Amnesty than that the Emperor allowed himself to be talked over by fine phrases about eternal gratitude, etc. He wanted, unknown to his Ministers and quite indiscriminatingly, to capture as many people as possible; his weak character was carried away in matters of this kind by feeble solutions if they were commended to him as morally lofty. The "magnanimous resolution" was then admired, as in duty bound, and the clergy recognized "its boundless charity." If the General could find no other explanation for the Amnesty than this, he may settle the matter with himself; but to put forward an imaginary explanation to cover his own lack of insight and imagination, and by its means to disparage, in the eyes of the public, the Emperor whose hospitality he enjoyed for many years, seems to be a somewhat unworthy use to make of the outlawry of the sovereign honour of defenceless princes which flourishes to-day . . . in republics.

On the subject of the criticism in Cramon's book of political events in Austria-Hungary, it need only be said that this criticism is based on a one-sided conception of political situations which makes the arguments worthless. I have tried to show this only in the Amnesty question. This example may suffice for an estimate of the book's value. To criticize it further would assuredly be a pleasing task; but I am afraid it would not prove of general interest.

I do not know whether General von Cramon has remained loyal to his dynastic sentiments even after the Revolution. If this is so and if for this reason my criticism of his attitude seems to him too severe, I would only ask him to imagine anyone's giving public expression to such a contemptuous

opinion of his Emperor, as he has done of mine, and to think what his answer would be. Or was General von Cramon unaware that the Austrians as well as the Germans, had a country and an Emperor who were and still remain sacred to them? And although the old Austria harboured many German friends who, by regarding a Pan-Germany under Prussian hegemony as their fatherland and striving for the domination of the Hohenzollerns, were guilty of high treason against their country no less heinous than that of those Slavs of whose treachery they could not adequately express their horror, nevertheless, the General might have known that there were also in Austria Germans, incapable of any crime, whose loyal German hearts, in true German fashion, were unswervingly devoted to their Empire and their country alone. And this country was not Germany, but Austria. I should also like to remind him that Prince Bismarck, when some such "Germans" made a pilgrimage to him, sent them home, and had to remind them that they were Austrians. He would assuredly have condemned the lack of political taste in the conclusion of Herr von Cramon's book where, assuming a sentimental pose, he casts his eyes, full of the lust of annexation, on the Danube country of Austria.

It is worthy of note that the Emperor Wilhelm, who came on a visit to Laxenburg on 6th July, 1917, that is, immediately after the proclamation of the Amnesty, declared the Emperor Karl's decree to be completely justified and necessary. The Emperor Karl told me this with great satisfaction immediately after his interview with the German Emperor. On this occasion, too, as on others during the whole period of the War, the Emperor Wilhelm's intuition was opposed to the sentiments and opinions of his generals.

#### IV

On 4th July, 1917, Dr. Urban, a German deputy and ex-Minister, called on me, and explained that he did not consider the Constitutional Committee of the Lower House the proper body to carry through a revision of the Constitution.

In his opinion the appointment of a State Conference consisting of from fifteen to twenty members, to whom ministerial rank should be assigned, would do the work much better. The function of this State Conference should be the working out of a reorganization of the Constitution and administration of Austria. I seized on this idea with joy and promised to support it to the best of my powers; that same evening I submitted the following *promemoria* to the Emperor:

“The starting point of the policy to be pursued in the future must be the forming of a majority on the basis of the programme of national autonomy; for there can no longer be any doubt that the free right of self-determination of the nations will be the watchword of the future.

“It is not a question of taking a decision on the question whether national autonomy is to be granted or not, but of coming to terms with the fact that national autonomy is bound to prevail. It would be folly to believe that after the war the Jugoslavs in Austria will allow themselves to be dominated by the German majority or the Jugoslavs in Hungary permit themselves to be ruled by the Magyars. It would be equally foolish to believe that the Germans in Bohemia will consent to be dominated by the Czech majority.

“But it is to the supreme interest of the Government to deprive the Entente powers of their trump card, the championship of the ‘little oppressed nations.’ We must rather make timely preparations for the coming peace negotiations and take the wind out of the sails of the Entente powers.

“For reasons of foreign policy, we must not only announce in good time our intention of granting the right of self-determination to the nations within the limits which are imposed by the State as a whole; expression must also be given to the will of Parliament to carry out a revision of constitutional and administrative law on those lines.

“To publish a detailed programme would be dangerous, as it would be bound to arouse dissatisfaction and thence opposition among all the nations. The aim which

the future Government intends to set before itself must be shown only in broad outlines. This aim should be national autonomy within the State as a whole.

"To form a ministry on this basis would be difficult in itself. It will be more difficult, however, nay, almost impossible for the future Cabinet to maintain itself against all the perils which the carrying out of the autonomy programme will bring with it. The ministers will be so absorbed by the actual day-to-day tasks of government that they will lack the necessary time and peace of mind for attention to the difficult question of reorganization.

"The ministry should, therefore, not at first be burdened with the carrying out of the reforms. The appointment of a 'State Conference,' consisting of from fifteen to twenty members, is to be recommended. The members should be given ministerial rank, and devote themselves, unburdened by ministerial responsibility, to the great task of reorganizing Austria. This would place on record for foreign countries our serious determination to find a solution of Austrian questions in harmony with the demands of modern times. The tasks of the State Conference might be described as follows:

"To deliberate on and work out a reorganization of the Constitution and administration of Austria on the basis of the guarantee of the widest right of self-determination for the various nations consistent with the simultaneous guarantee of the interests involved in the maintenance and consolidation of the Empire as a whole.

"The following questions remain to be discussed:

"1. Whether this Conference should be established by law or by a holograph letter. The first method would have the advantage that, if it were voted by Parliament—which is a possibility—it would give public expression to the will of Parliament to regulate the Constitution and to grant national autonomy. The second method would have the advantage that it would avoid the objections which Parliament itself would raise on account of the competition

with the Constitutional Committee. The Constitutional Committee itself is powerless to discharge such a task.

"2. A second question would be whether the members of the Conference should be appointed by His Majesty, or whether they, in part at least, should be chosen by the Reichsrat. In the latter case a nomination list submitted by both Houses, from which His Majesty could appoint the members, would also be possible. In any case the matter should first be discussed with leading politicians."

The Emperor, who approved of the idea, promised me to show the memorandum to the Prime Minister, which he actually did. But this way too was blocked. The press got wind of the affair too soon, and killed the idea by pointing out how unfortunate Austria's experience of "State Conferences" had been in the past.

From Dr. Urban I received the following letter:

Lower House,  
7th July, 1917.

YOUR EXCELLENCY,

The idea of creating a new representative body to work out a scheme of constitutional reform was opposed by the German parties mainly because they regarded it as an infringement of the rights of Parliament. There was no intention of this, and the error could only have arisen because the press learned of it in spite of the secrecy imposed, and criticized it on the lines that a general side-tracking of Parliament was intended.

In spite of this, the mooted of the idea has had this advantage, that people have become convinced that the work of the Constitutional Committee of the Lower House will lead to no result, and are now considering the formation of a joint committee to be appointed by both Houses of the Reichsrat. This will be in any case a considerable guarantee for an impartial consideration of the question and a safeguard against utopian constitutional experiments, and will, moreover, secure the removal of these difficult questions from the Lower House.

For the work of the Joint Committee it will be of the

greatest importance that there should be a concise and definite plan of work from the start.

Yours most sincerely,  
DR. URBAN.

Thus once again it was the German parties which upset a quite practical plan. It was all too soon evident how far the normal way of the philistine policy of a parliamentary Constitutional Committee would lead.

## V

On 3rd July, immediately after Their Majesties' return from Munich and Stuttgart, Professor Dr. Josef Redlich, whose name Hohenlohe and I had put forward as permanent Austrian Prime Minister, was received in audience by the Emperor. The sole purpose of this audience was to discover Redlich's attitude to various political questions, especially the question of national autonomy. Professor Redlich, as I had expected, from the beginning took our view on this question. This satisfied the condition on which his being entrusted with the formation of a Cabinet had been made dependent. The Emperor received Professor Redlich again two days later, and invited him to take over the position of Austrian Prime Minister. Both His Majesty and Professor Redlich gave me an account of what passed at this audience. The Emperor started with the Amnesty, the text of the holograph letter in particular, and stated emphatically that he wished this act of grace to be regarded as the first step in a new direction. Accordingly, the following three points must be clearly stated in the declaration of the new Government:

1. Guarantee of national autonomy.
2. Maintenance of the centralized State.
3. A complete and honourable confession of faith on the subject of peace.

"Only in this way can we attain to full results," were the Emperor's words. He discussed the military situation with

great animation, and also the absolute necessity of securing peace at the earliest possible date. The policy of seeing things through to the bitter end was, in his view, perfectly hopeless, and as he had come to this conclusion, he was bound to leave no stone unturned to prevent further thousands of men from being driven to death. The conduct of the Austrian peoples was beyond praise, brave at the Front, patient at home.

Professor Redlich discussed these questions at length. He explained that with regard to the three points of the programme, the guiding lines marked out by the situation must be maintained, and that he was also convinced that internal policy must also be unconditionally ruled by the peace question. He would not, however, disguise the fact that the carrying out of the programme would involve overcoming very great difficulties, and that the opposition which would undoubtedly make itself felt against a Government with this programme could be met only by calmness and firmness. The Emperor then invited Professor Redlich to undertake the formation of a Cabinet; he should first sound the parties and report to him on Saturday, 7th July. Professor Redlich replied that in deference to the confidence His Majesty showed in him he was prepared to try to carry out the task imposed on him, and, with regard to the formation of the Cabinet, expressed the opinion that all the nationalities should be represented on it. The question of creating posts of secretaries of State was discussed, and unanimously decided to be practicable. Professor Lammasch should enter the Cabinet as Minister of Justice. The Emperor concluded by saying: "You might discuss it with Czernin, Hohenlohe, and Polzer."

When I made my evening report on 4th July, His Majesty told me that he was very pleased with the audience, and expressed his confident hope that a Redlich Ministry would enable us to overcome the difficulties of the situation and get into smooth water.

Immediately after his remarks on Redlich's audience, the Emperor handed me a typed blue slip saying: "This code telegram has been intercepted and de-coded. Read it." It was a de-coded telegram from the German Consul General

at Budapest, Count Fürstenberg, to the Foreign Office at Berlin, and read as follows:

*Code Telegram.*

Count von Fürstenberg to the Foreign Office at Berlin.  
No. 79.

Budapest,  
1st July, 1917.

To the Secretary of State, Herr von Stumm.

Professor Stein will report early on Monday; he has [some words missing from telegram] . . . me, with regard to the fact that Andrassy Julius considers it very important that the Delegations should be convened as soon as possible, by the end of July if possible. Haste is necessary, because Andrassy intends to tackle the Foreign Minister as soon as possible, before it is too late, about the Slav attacks and problems connected with them. Andrassy is counting definitely on Tisza's support.

As Andrassy ascribes all the blame for his not having been made Prime Minister to intrigues on the part of Czernin, who looks on him as a dangerous rival, he will do everything in his power to shake the position of Czernin, whom he also regards as a menace to the Alliance. Andrassy has also great objections to the alliance between Czernin and his opponent, Justh, objections which have lately become greater. Justh's speech on the suffrage question yesterday, in which he lauded Czernin to the skies, justifies Andrassy's objections.

I have asked Stein to report to you on the matter.

"Well, what do you think of that?" the Emperor repeated several times as I read it. "It tells me nothing new," was my reply. "Count Czernin is so attached to his post that he does not shrink even from allying himself against his rival with the leader of the Independents in Hungary, that is, with the antithesis of the Greater Austrians. It is not news to me either that there is a well-used wire between Pest and Berlin which does not touch Vienna. In any case this telegram throws a lurid light on the witches' kitchen of behind-the-scenes politics." The Emperor told me that he had



instructed the head of the Intelligence Department to make further investigations. I remarked that I doubted whether anything further would be discovered, and the Emperor replied: "In any case treasure this telegram carefully. We may perhaps be able to make good use of it one day."

All too soon the wind changed. On 6th July the German Emperor and Empress came on a visit to Laxenburg. The German Ambassador, Count Wedel, was well informed of the events and the atmosphere both in the Ballhausplatz and in the German National Union. It was common talk that Count Wedel, an undisguised Pan-German propagandist and enemy of our dynasty, was extremely uneasy about the new course in politics announced in the letter proclaiming the Amnesty. He took advantage of the German Emperor's presence in Vienna, or, rather, in Laxenburg, to call his attention to the danger that threatened. People were then convinced that the war spirit of the enemy was beginning to weaken and that they were showing a certain inclination towards peace. The gentlemen at Berlin expressed themselves in no uncertain voice to the effect that in these circumstances "centrifugal tendencies,"<sup>1</sup> as attempts to solve the Austrian problem were designated and disposed of in the German Empire, must not be allowed to appear, and that nothing but a purely German Government would be tolerated in Austria. Even Count Czernin, who easily succumbed to every variation in the course, seems to have been influenced in this direction. He did not receive Professor Redlich on 7th July, which gave Redlich the impression that something had gone wrong, especially as Hohenlohe, who had joined with me in suggesting Redlich as a candidate, spoke to him with great reserve. As a matter of fact, Professor Redlich was, unknown to me, informed by the Emperor by telephone on 7th July that it was necessary to postpone for the moment getting into touch with the parties. The Emperor did not discuss the new turn of events with me, and as I had no information from any other source, I believed that the official decision to invite Redlich to form a Cabinet had been postponed to a suitable date. It was not until later, when the question of appointing a per-

<sup>1</sup> This expression is used in their memoirs alike by Ludendorff, Cramon, and Bethmann Hollweg.

manent Cabinet again came up, that the Emperor told me that he had had to abandon the idea of appointing Redlich on account of the opposition the idea had aroused on the German side.

The Emperor Wilhelm on this visit received in audience the chief dignitaries of the Empire. I did not neglect to have a long talk with Seidler before his audience: I begged him to give the German Emperor a full explanation of the difficulties of our domestic situation, and to emphasize the fact that a continuation of the War would inevitably mean the collapse of the Monarchy. He must not neglect to explain the terrible seriousness of our position, and, in particular, to point out how difficult it was to keep the other nations, who had less interest in the War than the Germans and the Magyars, up to the mark politically. But after the audience, I heard from Seidler that he had hardly been able to get a word in: the German Emperor, by the aid of statistical tables and maps, which were lying spread out on a table, expatiated on the certainty of the decisive success of submarine warfare. In face of this confidence of victory which the Emperor displayed, it was impossible for him to express any lack of confidence in ultimate success.

## CHAPTER XI

### LIFE AT THE VILLA WARTHOLZ

#### I

THEIR Majesties went into residence at the Villa Wartholz at Reichenau on 9th July, 1917. Court life here was different from that at Laxenburg. The Emperor's daily journeys to Army Headquarters at Baden were discontinued. Freiherr von Marterer moved to Reichenau with part of the Military Chancery, while Prince Zdenko Lobkowitz remained at Laxenburg and only came to report occasionally. From time to time the Empress's Master of the Household, Count Alexander Esterházy, also came to Reichenau. The Private Office was lodged in the second storey of the Annahof, where was also the Military Chancery. Marterer, Dr. Seydl, the Hofburg Chaplain, and myself lived in the Annahof. Audiences mostly took place in the forenoon, and the gentlemen received in audience usually lunched at the "Marshal's Table," which thus presented a different aspect every day and afforded great intellectual entertainment. The "Table" was held in the villa which had formerly belonged to Freiherr von Schloissnigg, and which, like several other villas in the immediate neighbourhood of the Villa Wartholz, had been bought by the Emperor. In fine weather the Emperor gave audiences in the park of the Villa. I was sent for at all hours of the day. My daily report, on the other hand, was practically always made in the evening, either in one of the rooms on the ground floor or on the big terrace, according to the weather. The apartments of the Imperial family were on the first floor. One evening when I had been instructed to report there, an unusual occurrence, I met the little Crown Prince on the staircase. He stopped, and, with the graciousness native to him, wanted to say something to me; but he could not think of anything at first, which embarrassed him. He looked at the ground, and at once found

a subject which he clutched at: his shoelace had come undone, and he said: "It's really terrible how shoelaces always come undone." I replied that it was truly fatal how easily shoelaces seemed to loosen of themselves; but if you tied a good stout knot, they would not come loose any more. "But you must not make knots," pronounced the Crown Prince. I thought to myself that this principle might also be applied in statecraft.

The aide-de-camp, who had announced me, showed me into a pretty, not very large room, which, to judge from the multitude of flowers about, was the Empress's sitting-room. The Emperor was sitting at the desk, and before the fire-place, in which a fire was burning—it was a chilly September day—the Empress was sitting on the floor, surrounded by her children, telling them stories out of a picture-book. It was a pretty picture of family life. The Emperor made me sit down near the desk, and I began my report. In a little the door was thrown open violently and the Crown Prince rushed in, but after he took in the position, he went to his mother and the big picture-book. The Archduchess Adelheid and the Archduke Robert came up to the Emperor, and, leaning against his knee, listened to my report, obviously inspired by the one idea that I should soon come to an end, so that the Emperor could play with them again. The children stood firmly on their rights: in the evenings, for at least half an hour before bedtime, the Emperor belonged to them.

So passed the hours of the Emperor Karl's reputedly dissipated life. In the afternoons he frequently took a little walk, generally accompanied by one of the gentlemen-in-waiting, and sometimes a Minister who had come to report, so that not even the time devoted to recreation might be wasted. In the autumn there were hunting parties in the Reichenau mountains or in the Mürzsteg district; but the hours the Emperor devoted to this pleasure were very few. At the stag rutting season, His Majesty permitted me to go deer-stalking in the Schneeberg district, mostly fixing the evenings on which he himself was going on a hunting expedition.

At the beginning of our stay in Reichenau, Professor F. W. Foerster came to Austria. After consulting Aulic Councillor

Lammasch and receiving His Majesty's consent, I had asked him to come and help us. He came on 10th July. In the morning I discussed with him the situation of Austria. We found ourselves in agreement about what must be done. He knew Austria better than many of us Austrians.<sup>1</sup> He knew the fundamental conditions on which the existence of Austria depended. He was received by His Majesty on the evening of 10th July. After the audience he came to my office, still so much under the influence of the words he had heard from the Emperor's mouth, that he expressed the opinion that under no circumstances should the Emperor's utterances be withheld from the world. He made a note of them in my office. A few days later he sent me an account of his audience and asked me to persuade the Emperor to authorize him to publish it. I submitted it to His Majesty at my evening report on 16th July. His Majesty declared his willingness to allow publication and instructed me to ask Count Czernin's opinion first, as his remarks had to some extent touched on matters of foreign policy. Czernin sent the draft back to me with a note to the effect that publication could not be permitted. I begged the Emperor to dismiss his Minister rather than submit to such a prohibition. There was nothing in the Emperor's remarks which could in any way upset or wound; on the contrary their effect could not be anything but illuminating and conciliatory. If Count Czernin, out of consideration for our ally, believed that an avowal of belief in world peace could not be permitted, such consideration in my view was excessive. I could think of no other reason for his refusal to permit publication. But the Emperor did not wish to make a Cabinet question of the affair and said to me: "There, you see from one example what the responsible Ministers make of me. I may not let the world see what I am, except in so far as suits them." Czernin's attitude was quite incomprehensible to me at the time, but I soon discovered the explanation. On 2nd October, 1917, that is, about two and a half months later, he himself in a speech at Budapest described international disarmament as the one way out. That is, he said

<sup>1</sup> See *Das österreichische Problem*, by F. W. Foerster, Hugo Heller, Vienna, 1914. It was this pamphlet which inspired me to invite Professor Foerster to come to Vienna.

the very thing to which he had objected to the Emperor's giving public expression. It was the same game as he played in the national autonomy question. When I counselled this programme, he opposed it. Two months later he kindly informed me that the granting of national autonomy was the only thing to be done. Count Czernin seems to have failed to see that the words of an Emperor would have resounded throughout the whole world, and would have had an incomparably greater effect than the speech of a Minister, which died away almost as soon as spoken. It appears as if Czernin's systematic purpose was to push the Emperor as much out of sight as possible and put himself in the best and brightest light.

Professor F. W. Foerster's description of his audience with the Emperor Karl ran as follows:

"Recently I had the honour of a conversation with the Emperor Karl on the subject of the relation of the Amnesty to the present world situation. I am authorized to make public the following statements of the Emperor: 'My proclamation of an amnesty gave rise to great apprehension and opposition in many quarters. I had, however, long been firmly convinced that the hopeless entanglement in Austria called for a radical change of policy. The tradition of narrow-mindedness and short-sightedness is so firmly rooted that only a complete change of heart can save us. An example must be given. This can only be done by the dynasty, which for centuries has been the symbol of unity of the Austrian peoples, and whose spiritual power over its peoples is based solely on the dignity of its international mission. I know that thousands among all my peoples have for long desired such a new beginning; abroad, however, no one understands or dreams for what purpose we have been united by Providence in this south-eastern corner of Europe; Austria is neither a German nor a Slav state. The Germans were, it is true, the founders of the Danube Monarchy; but to-day they are a minority surrounded and permeated by aspiring nations; they can be the leaders of younger civilizations if they give an example of the highest culture and meet the new and rising races with love, respect and generosity. There were sins on all sides; but the blunders that were committed must be made good—therefore, let's have done with the past.

“ ‘ I am not the least afraid of the self-determination of nations, if it is not an abstraction removed from Austrian realities. If we generously guarantee the individual groups the utmost conceivable scope for their character, for the exercise of their cultural creative powers, for their pleasure in their own language, in a word, for their aspiration to count as a nation, they will unite with the whole in new forms much more sincerely than before, and will of themselves do away with useless exaggerations. Less than in any other country can State unity be imposed on the population of Austria from without; it must arise out of the moral unity of the peoples. The young should be taught in this spirit; the old provocative and mischief-making reading books of both sides should be replaced by reading books in which German school children are shown the great gifts and virtues of the Slav race, and Slav school children should honestly be told what the German character has done for culture and especially for the young nations of the Slav south-east.

“ ‘ What we have to do here in small things, is also our task in big things. I am whole-heartedly for a pacific alliance of the nations after the war; there is no other way of salvation; I am also prepared for any internationally organized scheme of disarmament. The instigators of war are either people without heart, or people who do not know what war is. I have lived through the war; men have been blown to bits close to me. After that one's old ideas have to go.

“ ‘ But the first and most urgent form of disarmament is that the nations should at last cease their mutual insults and accusations. We all share the guilt of this war; henceforward, we must all feel responsible for the peace of the world, and, first of all, we must all arrange our internal affairs so that no state may be the occasion of a fresh world conflagration on account of unsettled and unpeaceful domestic conditions. Let us, therefore, with this new feeling of European responsibility, begin to settle our internal problems; this will give us the confidence of Europe, and may be an example which will advance the great pacific union of the nations.’

“ The Emperor uttered these words with great emotion and in most emphatic tones, obviously deeply affected by the greatness of the present historical moment and by the lofty

duty of those in positions of the highest responsibility to be in this hour guides and leaders to the supreme saving truths of national life."

Soon after, as I have already said, Czernin also professed his faith in this same idea of international disarmament, but with this difference, that he entirely left out of account its connection with the internal problems of the Monarchy, which had appeared so clearly in the Emperor's utterances.

In the course of further conversations with Foerster, we agreed that the Amnesty must be supported, explained, and proclaimed by subsequent actions for what it was intended to be—a first step in a new direction. Foerster was resolved to agitate for this. On 17th July, 1917, he arranged a discussion evening in the Vienna Political Association, at which he found sympathetic understanding for his ideas among representatives of all nations and political views. Redlich also spoke on this occasion. The ideas then worked out laid down quite clearly the guiding lines to be followed in the new course of reconciliation between the nations. The meeting of the Political Association was condemned in many quarters, generally on the grounds so dear to Berlin and Budapest, that every expression of a desire for peace would be interpreted abroad as weakness, a thing to be avoided at all costs. That was, of course, radically wrong; for, in the first place, it was not pacifist declarations in the Central Powers which lessened the readiness of the enemy to make peace, it was simply and solely the failure of submarine warfare, and their consequent security in the expectation of help from the United States which brought about this state of mind in the Entente. Those in power, both in Germany and with us, whose fatal error in estimating the effects of submarine warfare weighed heavily on their consciences, naturally tried to avert attention as far as possible from the real reason for the decline in the enemy's readiness to make peace. In the second place, it was never directly stated at this meeting that we wished for peace because we felt too weak to carry on the war any longer; the speeches which were made culminated in the conviction that we must first aim at establishing peace among the nations in Austria-Hungary, and that agreement at home was the best way to advance understanding with our enemies. But in



Berlin and Budapest the establishment of internal peace in the Hapsburg Empire was rejected root and branch. They aimed at maintaining the dominance of the Germans and Magyars. All efforts opposed to this aim were styled "Entente policy," and thereby discredited. Since we were under the yoke of the Pan-German Supreme Army Command and the "Pan-German Magyars," the printing of a report in the *Fremdenblatt* of this meeting of the Vienna Political Association, which was attended by representatives of all the Austrian nations, was not permitted. Could not the gentlemen who were always bewailing the "whimpering about peace" and talking of "centrifugal tendencies," even when the very opposite was in question, see that the unification of elements, hitherto divided, which was shown at this meeting, would be interpreted abroad not as weakness but as strength, or at least as the beginning of a cure? The only explanation of the peculiar attitude of our statesmen is that Berlin and Budapest did not wish Austria to be cured, and that Vienna was incapable of resisting them. It is typical that the Government utterances against the encouragement of national hatred were suppressed, while the Magyar Press, and, in particular, the *Az Est*, one of the most widely-read daily papers in Hungary, was allowed to indulge with impunity in the most shameless inflaming of national animosity. The following is a typical example:

"Our worst enemy, the old Austria, after the failure of her propaganda against us, has begun an open and systematic fight against us. In the air of Vienna, which stinks with the impending dissolution of Austria, fly not birds but curses and slanders. Every Czech blackguard and every Austrian ass spits at Hungary. Now an Austrian owl has discovered for the edification of his friends that very few Hungarian soldiers have fallen in the field, and that enormous numbers have been taken prisoner. If this were true, we should applaud joyfully, for healthy, noble Magyar blood is much more necessary for the world than Austrian blood. But unhappily Hungary has lost a quite disproportionate number in dead and prisoners of war, not only through the treachery of the Czechs, but also thanks

to Austrian generalship. All these losses oblige us to bring into existence an independent Hungarian army, led by Hungarian officers and not by Austrian enemies. Moreover, Magyar interests must be organized in all spheres. Our people, from the youngest child to the oldest greybeard, must be taught that we cannot any longer live in community with Austria, because this will inevitably cause our overthrow and our destruction. Towards the Austrians we have no further obligations. We regret every mouthful of bread we give them, every penny we pay for their miserable industrial products. Let us cease to visit either the Bohemian spas or the Austrian watering-places, for every ha'penny we take there will be made into bullets which will shoot us down, with every mouthful we give them we are feeding our enemies who use the strength so won against us. Although there may be differences among us, yet let us be in this one thing as firm as a rock, against which the Austrian skulls will be cracked. Otherwise these cunning Austrian attacks will gain their end. But to be conquered by Austria would be a greater ignominy than any defeat, more bitter than death, for it would be dishonour."

The *Reichspost*, which made this article the subject of a political discussion, closed it with the very pertinent question whether the defence of Austrian interests was always to remain entrusted exclusively to Governments which were agreeable to those in power in Hungary, or at the best to men who proved themselves too weak to withstand the Hungarian assault. Consider that this article in the *Az Est*, which truly leaves nothing to be desired in the way of baseness of sentiment, remained unmolested in a time of drastic censorship, and that Dr. Wekerle thought the dissemination of this kind of venom quite harmless, while the Emperor's conciliatory words spoken at his interview with Foerster, which, like the speeches made at the above-mentioned meeting, were evidence of lofty moral nobility, were suppressed by our Foreign Minister—out of anxiety for the possible dissatisfaction they might cause in Berlin or Budapest. But, assuming that the leading statesmen of Central Europe possessed normally working brains, it is impossible to believe that they

seriously thought that newspaper views like those of the *Az Est* were calculated to display to the enemy the internal cohesion and, consequently, the strength of the Monarchy, while the desire for unity unanimously expressed by representatives of all nations at the meeting of the Vienna Political Association was evidence of our weakness, or, as the Pan-Germans, and the German generals in particular, loved to express it, of "centrifugal tendencies." Such a preposterous view cannot be accepted. We must, therefore, come to the conclusion that the aim of Berlin and Budapest was to prevent the rehabilitation of the Monarchy, that is, that they desired Austria's collapse. I except Vienna, as the Austrian statesmen, including Count Czernin, of course, were among the tricked. It is in any case typical of the attitude of the last-mentioned, that he wished to banish Professor Foerster, which was only prevented by the express orders of the Emperor.<sup>1</sup>

## II

The Emperor had always regarded Seidler's Government as purely provisional. The question who should be entrusted with the formation of a Government to carry out the great programme was one which occupied a large part of the Emperor's attention in the very first days of his stay at Reichenau, and which he more than once discussed with me at length. Various candidates came up for consideration, among others, the ex-Premier, Max Wladimir, Freiherr von Beck, the then Chief President of the Administrative Court, Freiherr von Schwartzenu, and Deputy Ritter von Lodge-man. The Emperor even thought for a moment of making a general head of the Government. Seidler was never mentioned as a possible person to form a permanent Cabinet. I do not believe that he himself ever thought of it. The most promising candidate was Freiherr von Beck. He was present on 14th July at a preliminary discussion, which took place during an excursion to the Höllental, and was received by the

<sup>1</sup> The Emperor, with expressions of the greatest indignation, gave me a letter of Czernin's to read which made this request in unqualified terms.

Emperor on the afternoon of 17th July. That same day the members of the Address Deputation of the Upper House were received in audience, and were followed by the Chief of the General Staff, then Count Czernin, and then, as already mentioned, Freiherr von Beck, whose audience lasted over two hours. I had made my report in the morning. The Emperor was obviously fatigued by receiving so many people and sent for me merely to give me his impressions of Freiherr von Beck. He was not satisfied with the audience. He had expected more. Beck began with a speech in defence of Dr. Sieghart, the ex-Governor of the Land Mortgage Bank, expressing his disapproval of Sieghart's having been removed from his post. The Emperor got the impression that, in the event of his being asked to form a Government, Beck had Dr. Sieghart in his eye for Minister of Finance. The Emperor did not attach too great importance to this intention, for he said: "It is possible, I admit, that Sieghart is one of the most intelligent men in Austria, and it is also possible that no better Minister of Finance could be found. I would never refuse to give him this office, if a Prime Minister in whom I had confidence advised me to do so on impartial grounds. But that is a mere matter of detail. There are to-day such great problems to be solved, problems on which the existence or non-existence of the Monarchy depends, that I cannot understand why Beck attaches such great importance to the Sieghart question, and wasted nearly an hour of my time on it. But the chief thing is a programme, a goal; personal questions, and recriminations have no place here. Candidly, I did not get a very good impression of him, and could not make up my mind to go further than to instruct him to discover what reception his plans are likely to receive in political circles."

I replied that I regretted this very much, as Beck was considered to be a skilful and serious statesman, and that his appointment to the highest office of State would have a good and a calming effect. I said that I had heard many people express the opinion that only a statesman who was thoroughly acquainted with Parliament and its every member, and who had a ripe experience in politics, would be equal to the difficult situation. I confessed that I would have preferred Redlich,

but as this was out of the question, I thought Beck would be a good choice. I inferred that the Emperor could not make up his mind to appoint Beck from the fact that at this discussion of Beck's audience he also talked over other candidates. First of these was a general, Lieutenant Field Marshal von Czapp. With regard to him, I said I could express no opinion, as I did not know him; but that, in general, I did not think a general suitable for the post of Prime Minister, because generals must always be in some sense dependent in a friendly way on the military authorities, and would only possess political experience in very rare cases. After we had considered various other people, I mentioned Aulic Councillor Lammasch. Under the influence of the guiding principles for home and foreign policy recently worked out by Foerster, principles which were in harmony with those of Lammasch and which, finally, were his own as well, the Emperor declared his readiness to have an interview with Lammasch. "That is certainly the best choice," he added. "Lammasch is known to everyone as a man of peace. His name alone is a programme. But the business must be settled quickly before our plans are countermined. Is Lammasch in Vienna?" I replied that he was in Salzburg. The Emperor made a gesture of irritation and impatience, and told me to telegraph to him, and, of course, not to say a word to anyone. I telegraphed to Lammasch to come to Reichenau immediately. He arrived on the 21st of July. I met him at the station, and told him why he had been sent for during our drive to the Imperial Villa. He was greatly surprised, and said that he could not accept. His health was very much affected and he was physically unequal to such a burden. Moreover, it was so unexpected that it was impossible for him to consider everything he would have to think over calmly before he could accept. I told him that thousands of the best men in the country would immediately rally round him and give him their support. The Emperor would certainly give him time to think the matter over quietly. I only asked him not to reject the offer altogether. Unfortunately the audience had not the desired success.

An unlucky star must have shed an evil ray on Austria at that hour. Lammasch refused. The Emperor seems to have

interpreted his modesty as lack of self-confidence, and not to have dared to urge him to assume such a heavy task, for the successful discharge of which, as the Emperor quite rightly saw, self-confidence was a *sine qua non*. The Emperor could not know that Lammasch, once at work and sustained by his strong convictions, would be very different from the man struggling irresolutely with himself whom he had seen.

The Emperor sent for me as soon as the audience was over. He expressed his great regret that this step had also led to nothing. Lammasch could not be persuaded to accept office. A few days later, I received the following letter from Professor F. W. Foerster:

Vienna,  
25th July, 1917.

YOUR EXCELLENCY,

If any further assurance were necessary after the impression of your deep rooted conviction which I brought away from our interview, your kind words have at least comforted me by telling me that you are continuing to work steadfastly along the lines we discussed. I am, however, very much disappointed. According to my reading of the whole position, a liberating chivalrous word must at once be spoken, and a Cabinet formed which will be in close touch with opinion abroad and which enjoys assured credit there. Anything else would at the best result in muddling along, and would also impair more and more the chances of peace conditions for Austria. Even the German majority could now be helped only by a resolute Cabinet in Austria, with assured international relations; only in this way can we get free from Ludendorff. That is my unshakable conviction.

An unfortunate mutual misunderstanding seems to have prevailed at Lammasch's interview with the Emperor. His excessive modesty played him a nasty trick; the Emperor, in his turn, thought he could see irresolution, and, therefore, felt no confidence in him, so that he could not urge the hesitating Lammasch, who was absolutely made for the job, just because he knows foreign countries. If another chance should occur, please take account of Lammasch's

psychology; he expected stronger urging and definite orders from the Emperor, and he in his turn made the Emperor uncertain. If he were once in the saddle, with his strong feeling of duty and his high courage, he would be as energetic as he previously was hesitating. Yesterday, in expectation of a fresh summons, he worked out a programme which in itself would have cured the fever of Europe. But God bless you, that would have been too good to be true. . . .

I think that His Majesty perhaps had a sort of strong feeling that many circles are not ripe for such a decided Cabinet as the one we planned, and that the moment will come later—and in thinking it, I ask myself again: Have we any time to lose?

Even if it has all been in vain, my journey has been fully repaid by my getting into touch with your Excellency, and by the knowledge that you are at "his" side, and that "he" is what I expected.

Yours cordially,  
FR. W. FOERSTER.

Aulic Councillor Lammasch sent me the following letter:

Salzburg,  
29th July, 1917.

YOUR EXCELLENCY,

Foerster and I left Vienna early on Friday. Personally, I am relieved at the change of plan, because I do not feel myself strong enough for that extremely difficult and responsible work. What I would have had to offer, would in substance have been only my name. The memory of my activities at the two Peace Conferences and in four arbitration courts would have given my name some influence in neutral and enemy countries abroad, but that is not enough. My most heartfelt desire is that the Emperor's noble and generous spirit may succeed in bringing peace to the world, and thereby giving Austria the place which belongs to her. If your Excellency has an opportunity, I should be very much obliged if you could again assure His Majesty that it was not anxiety about my health—what does that

matter at a time when hundreds of thousands are sacrificing their lives?—but my doubts whether my strength would be adequate that was the reason for my hesitation.

With kindest regards,

I am,

Yours sincerely,

LAMMASCH.

My conversations with Foerster and Lammasch at Reichenau did not escape the notice of the Ballhausplatz. In view of the old antagonism between Count Czernin and Aulic Councillor Lammasch,<sup>1</sup> it was not surprising that Czernin regarded his position as threatened, and felt increasing mistrust not only of the head of the Private Office, who had instituted these negotiations with the approval of the Emperor, but also of the Emperor himself.

This was the beginning of Count Czernin's efforts to dislodge me from my post. These were fateful days I lived through at Reichenau. I felt the heart of my country beat more and more feebly, and was unable to break the ruinous power of the men who prevented the application of the only means which could have saved her. I was convinced that a Government must be formed which would set itself the task of solving our national problems, in order that this might not be done by our enemies in a fashion which took no account of the continuance of the Hapsburg Empire. We must win over Wilson and the United States to our side, must accept their ideas, of course, only in principle, at all costs prevent the United States from declaring war, and find in them a support against the imperialism of Italy, which was directed against us. There was at that time a strong anti-Italian "feeling" in the United States and also in England; the nearer the idea of autonomy in the Danube Monarchy came to realization, the more would the United States be in a position to oppose Italian imperialism. The then leader of our foreign policy writes as follows in his book, *Im Weltkrieg*, page 258: "Thus it came about that under his (Wilson's) patronage, and ostensibly on the basis of his fourteen points, the national question

<sup>1</sup> This antagonism dated from the period of the negotiations at Belvedere.



was not solved, but merely given a new turn, in so far as it did not remain entirely unaffected. Whereas Germans and Magyars had been the rulers, they now became the oppressed." It, of course, goes without saying that Wilson was not in a position to solve our national problems. He was, if we assume the sincerity of his aspirations, merely in favour of solution in itself; the solution we should have had to take in hand ourselves, and in good time, and thus have prevented its being provided by the enemy in an unknown, if not dishonourable and odious fashion. The task which we should have begun then, in the summer of 1917, was assuredly not easy, but it was not hopeless, if we had attacked it without any regard for the temper of Berlin and against the will of those in power in Hungary. Count Czernin, however, took the opposite way: he prevented any solution which might disturb the gentlemen in Berlin and the gentlemen of the German National Union, and supported the most powerful antagonist of the idea of national settlement, his personal friend, Count Tisza. The Germans and the Magyars clung obstinately to the point of view of maintaining their domination, and thereby themselves brought it about that ultimately they were treated in accordance with the imperialistic principle to which they adhered, and became the "oppressed" instead of the "rulers."

I was firmly convinced that after Lammasch's refusal the Emperor would entrust Freiherr von Beck with the formation of a Cabinet. This would have certainly happened if Count Czernin had not advocated Beck's cause. I can only form conjectures on the subject, but I think I am not wrong in believing that Czernin's somewhat impetuous attitude to Beck's candidature made the Emperor apprehensive lest the two of them should form a pact which would reduce him to a state of impotent dependence.

At my evening report on 25th July I had a remarkable conversation with the Emperor. His Majesty had not got back from an excursion until eight o'clock, and after supper I was sent for to make my report. When he had signed the last document, His Majesty immediately reopened the discussion of the question of the future Prime Minister. He began by again expressing his regret that Lammasch had refused to take office, but remarked that he really seemed to be

seriously ill. He then went on: "Czernin is hesitating between two candidates for the post, Beck and you. What is his real object? When I cannot make up my mind about Beck, he always comes back to the same point and advises me to appoint you as Prime Minister. You have, he says, the necessary energy, and also possess my confidence. Of course, I have no idea of acceding to his proposal. You refused when I put the question to you, and I know that you will abide by what you said. I believe that he is merely trying to separate you from me, and then he will set a trap to overthrow you and get rid of you for good and all." He added laughingly: "But I shall not fall into this trap." I replied: "Count Czernin does not know that I hold the view that no Prime Minister could maintain himself in Austria so long as he is at the helm."

I returned to the question of Beck; observing that he was an experienced statesman, and that during his Premiership universal suffrage had been established in Austria; he had made the last Compromise and had accomplished the feat of holding a Coalition together for two and a half years. A Beck Ministry would be in the normal line of development. "You mean on account of universal suffrage," replied the Emperor. "But that would apply only to Hungary. And what do you want with the normal line of development? In the normal line of development the Monarchy will collapse, it is bound to collapse. That has always been your view too." After a moment, he added with a laugh: "So you too, my Brutus! Name one single man who can put the coach on the rails again." I did not want to tell His Majesty that, as things were being allowed to take their course, I had already given up all hope, so I replied: "If Your Majesty cannot find anyone to support your policy, there is only one way out. Your Majesty must boycott all the politicians who accomplish nothing, all pull different ways, and in the end only make difficulties. Surround yourself with a trustworthy guard, with energetic and honest men, and establish a military dictatorship. Then give Germany a final date beyond which Your Majesty has resolved not to carry on the War, and make peace. In this way Your Majesty will weld the nation so firmly to you that you will be able to destroy this

wretched dualism and reorganize the Empire on national and federalistic lines."

The Emperor had risen from his chair and was staring at me.

After a pause he said: "Although you were perhaps not quite in earnest, I don't think the idea of a military dictatorship at all a bad one. It might be our salvation." I had spoken impulsively and without due consideration, in my despair at the bog in which we were caught. But now I had a sensation as if the Emperor had decided to dare to take even the most unprecedented step. True, it might succeed if the realization of the idea were attacked with prudence and resolution. The Emperor paced silently up and down the room. Then he suddenly stopped in front of me and said: "We have forgotten the Hungarian Coronation oath. I must act in the same way here as in Hungary. And in Hungary I must govern according to the Constitution, because I cannot break my oath." I observed that the whole business would have no meaning or object if the measure were not also extended to Hungary, to which the Emperor replied: "Nothing remains but the way of normal development. God grant that it may not lead to the end I fear." At this point the Emperor cut short the conversation, and asked me whether there was anything of interest in the newspapers. After I had drawn his attention to some notes, His Majesty left me, giving me his hand as he always did, with the words: "Thank you. Even if our discourse has led to no positive or satisfactory result, my mind is clearer on many points. I shall now probably make Seidler's appointment permanent."

Accordingly, on 31st July, 1917, Seidler was asked to form a permanent Government. The Cabinet was to be established on a parliamentary basis. Seidler, who was a general favourite and had no personal enemies, was excellently suited for carrying out a concrete task limited in scope and time, like getting the Budget through Parliament. As the head of a Government which would have had to lead a political movement, he was a failure. He was an able official, a man of parts, and the possessor of a skilful pen, but he had no political talent. The opportunities he missed in his first days of office could never be recovered. His declaration of policy showed

the political colourlessness of the new Government. He used many words and said nothing. He made a confession of faith in dualism, and people were satisfied. A strong Austrian Government was not secured; a feeble one was allowed to exist. Seidler's efforts were exhausted in securing peace and tranquillity for to-morrow. In the absence of all counter-pressure, the policy of the Pan-Germans held undisputed sway in Austria, and that of the falsifiers of the suffrage, in Hungary. The Seidler Ministry remained sterile. In such a soil the poisonous toadstools of the Northcliffe propaganda grew and multiplied.

I tried one last attack. In a memorandum submitted to the Emperor, I pointed out that our enemies were not concerned in the least with the programme for liberating the nations, but solely with stirring up the various nations of the Monarchy against each other and reducing them to a state of permanent political and economic dependence. We should become slaves, in the service of Anglo-American capital, if the Governments, recognizing the intentions of the Entente and regardless of the chauvinistic national parties in Austria and Hungary, did not immediately put forward a programme by which we should ourselves realize in an honourable manner the liberation of the nations which Wilson and the Entente professed they would realize. Since the nations in Austria and Hungary were territorially not sharply divided from each other, such a programme would merely have to consist of altering the forms of political life, that is, replacing the old forms by forms which would make it possible for the nations to live together. The new forms must, of course, be very different from the old ones. Seidler should put forward a clear programme, and ask the parties whether they were prepared to support it by entering the Government. If they refused, they should be told that Parliament would be dissolved and writs issued for a new election. It might be assumed with fair certainty that the deputies, threatened with new elections, would agree to any conditions. For the moment I remained ignorant of the effect of this memorandum, which the Emperor received without comment.

On 29th August, 1917, at half-past five in the afternoon, an hour or two after Count Czernin and the Austro-Hun-

garian Ambassador, Prince Gottfried Hohenlohe, had been received in audience, the Emperor sent for me, and put the following question to me: "You remember that at Laxenburg I gave you the draft of a letter to the German Emperor to be copied? By some indiscretion this letter has come to the knowledge of the Entente. A rigorous investigation must be set on foot, for this is more than an indiscretion, it is treachery." The Emperor was very angry, and spoke so sharply that I involuntarily got the impression that Count Czernin had been throwing suspicion on me. I replied that I remembered quite well being given the draft of a letter to the German Emperor at Laxenburg with instructions to have it typed. I had thought it would be much safer to copy the letter myself, and had locked myself into my office, typed the letter and then handed both the draft and the fair copy to His Majesty. His Majesty had signed the fair copy, which was then put in an envelope and handed to an aide-de-camp for delivery to the Emperor Wilhelm. At His Majesty's orders I had taken charge of the draft, which was still in my custody. I assured him that I remembered all the details perfectly. The draft had corrections in His Majesty's own hand. "Your Majesty asked me what I thought of the business, and I replied that Czernin was certainly assured of success if he caused Your Majesty to take such a step." The Emperor was taken aback and said: "What was in this letter then?" "So far as I can remember," I replied, "it was a proposal to make an offer of peace to Russia conjointly with Germany on the basis of the *status quo ante*." "No," replied the Emperor, "it is not that letter that we are concerned with. It was a *promemoria* of Czernin's, which I enclosed with a few words from myself." I replied: "This is the first time I have heard of this *promemoria*. I never saw any such document." The Emperor tried to recall whom he had entrusted with the typing of the letter. He thought it was perhaps the Military Chancery or an aide-de-camp.

Our conversation took place in the Park at Wartholz. The Emperor went to the window of the aides-de-camp's room, and reached for the diary in which the gentlemen on duty on the various days could be discovered from the handwriting. The diary also contained the names of those received in

audience and various other details. The Emperor turned over the leaves of the diary for some little time, but could not discover from it whom he had instructed to have the document copied. He was obviously very uneasy and repeated over and over again: "Who could it have been? To whom did I give the instruction? If only I could remember the business. But hundreds of fresh things turn up every day. The best of memories is bound to be at fault." He told me that our desperate position was described in the memorandum in the darkest colours, and that the discovery of this by the Entente had made an abrupt change in their readiness to make peace. I at once saw how serious the affair was, and was so horrified that the Emperor tapped me on the shoulder and said: "Calm yourself. I see quite clearly now that you have not been guilty of any carelessness." It was not until a fortnight later that the Emperor told me that the German Deputy Erzberger was the person guilty of the indiscretion. Everything was now explained.

### III

The Emperor sent for the provincial governors to come to Reichenau on 2nd October, 1917. A council took place under his chairmanship on the question whether new elections were practicable and advisable at the present juncture. In my memorandum I had recommended for consideration the question of possibly holding new elections. The governors were almost unanimously opposed to the idea, pointing out not only the technical difficulties involved, but also that it was politically advisable neither to exclude electors at present fighting nor to hold elections in the trenches. By the Emperor's orders, I was present at this council. The arguments put forward appeared to me quite conclusive. But I could not help feeling that the gentlemen were not quite alive to the situation. They did not take its terrible seriousness sufficiently into account. Even the boldest measures would have been justified, especially as it was only a question of the last resort. The mere announcement of such a measure might have brought the deputies to their senses. Moreover, the

programme of national autonomy would, even so late as this, have had a great attraction, and if properly supported by the Government, would have had a great influence on the elections.

The day on which this council ended in a negative result, I finally buried the autonomy programme, and resigned myself to the idea that only a miracle could save Austria from destruction.

How heartily the heads of the Government both in Austria and Hungary recoiled from the ideas on whose realization the continued existence of the Monarchy depended, is proved by the pronouncements which Dr. Wekerle and Dr. von Seidler made in the respective Parliaments in September, 1917. Dr. Wekerle declared it was quite outside the range of His Majesty's ideas to permit any change whatever in the dualistic form of government, and that he himself, on the occasion of his appointment as Prime Minister of Hungary, had received express assurance that the questions of national autonomy being discussed in Austria could not affect in any way, either direct or indirect, the inviolable integrity of the sacred Hungarian Crown; moreover, he had learned both from His Majesty and from the Austrian Government, as well as from the leading politicians outside the Government, that the existing boundaries of the Crown lands would be the criterion in determining any rights of self-government which might eventually be granted. He proceeded as follows:

"As the Austrian constitutional laws do not afford any means of punishing attempts against the integrity of the sacred Hungarian Crown, so that the Austrian Government can merely reject such attempts, whereas our penal laws allow of punishment for attempts against the integrity of Austrian territory, we shall raise the question of the acceptance of the principle of reciprocity at the coming negotiations."

And in direct connection with this declaration, which sounds like a threat, Dr. Wekerle from the Government benches made an open attack on the integrity of Austrian territory, that is, he was guilty of an action which he had in the last breath stigmatized as criminal if directed against Hungary. He said:

"With regard to our relations to the lands of Croatia and

Slavonia, we stand firmly on the foundation of Law XXX of the year 1868. We not only pay regard to the rights of Croatia and carry out its wishes which rest upon this Agreement, so far as falls within our sphere; we also support its cultural aspirations, and its national reinforcement, and desire to devote particular attention to fostering its industrial and commercial interests. We shall expressly support its desire, founded on the Law, that Dalmatia should again be annexed to it."

The Hungarian Parliament, which watched so jealously the territorial integrity of Hungary, greeted with loud applause this attack on the integrity of Austrian territories, which sounds so strange in connection with that threat. I regarded it as my obvious duty to draw His Majesty's attention to Dr. Wekerle's proceedings, and to stress the fact that it meant gratuitous mockery of Austria. It would be a great mistake to think that the constitutional position of Dalmatia was in dispute; Dalmatia indubitably belonged to Austria. Law XXX of 1868, quoted by Dr. Wekerle, could not alter that. Dalmatia, which had originally fallen to Austria as compensation for the cession of hereditary territory and which, after a brief interval, had returned to Austria, had, with the exception of the years 1805 to 1814, since 1797 (Peace of Campo-Formio) stood to Austria in the same legal and factual relation as the other lands and territories represented in the Reichsrat. This constitutional adherence of Dalmatia to Austria found its constitutional expression both in the Fundamental Law of 26th February, 1861, and in the Fundamental Laws of 21st December, 1867, relating to Imperial representation and to the common affairs of all the lands of the Monarchy. In Article III of the Imperial Patent of 26th February, 1861, it was, moreover, stated that the Provincial Code (*Landesordnung*) issued for Dalmatia could not come into force entirely at that date, because a final decision had not been reached on the subject of the constitutional relation of Dalmatia to Croatia and Slavonia. But this proviso was made purposeless by the express manifestation of the will of the Emperor and the consent of the Diet. As for Hungary's ambition to make a change in this constitutional relation in favour of Hungary, it was based on the assurance given by Hungary in § 65 of the



Hungarian-Croatian Compromise Act that she would never cease, in virtue of the right of the Crown of St. Stephen, to desire the reincorporation of Dalmatia and its union with Croatia and Slavonia. The treaty which was at the bottom of this Law, however, was, according to its preamble, concluded by the Kingdom of Hungary with Transylvania, on the one hand, and by the Kingdoms of Croatia and Slavonia, on the other, for the purpose of regulating the constitutional questions which had arisen among them. The validity of the Pact was thus assigned definite limits, and no binding force could be ascribed to the part of the Compromise Treaty which related to Dalmatia, even apart from the fact that the Austrian Ministry was never officially informed of the conclusion of the Compromise Treaty. Without doubt, I continued, Hungary had the right to encourage the union of Dalmatia with Croatia and Slavonia; there would be no objection to that; but the right to carry out this union under the Crown of St. Stephen must be countered by the equal right of Austria to aspire to and work for such a union within her frontiers. But against such attacks on the territorial integrity of Hungary, Dr. Wekerle desired to have the protection of the Penal Code; in accordance with the Fundamental Law on Reciprocity, to which Dr. Wekerle himself appealed, Austria must also regard an attack on her integrity as liable to penalty.

After I had finished my observations, the Emperor reminded me of his Hungarian coronation oath, seized his head in his hands and said: "Everything is confusion in this country; mine is a terrible inheritance. We must have clearness." I answered that it would be the business of the Austrian Prime Minister to make a very decided reply to this unheard of attack on our territorial integrity.

Soon after this, on 25th September, 1917, Dr. von Seidler announced his programme to the Lower House. The Emperor had previously given me Seidler's Government manifesto to read and asked me for my opinion of it. I said that only the paragraph in which the reform of the Constitution was discussed was of any significance, but that even this paragraph was shorn of all power to attract votes by the entirely superfluous declaration that national autonomy would not affect Hungarian constitutional relations in general, and dual-

ism in particular. On these conditions, which made any radical solution of the nationalities problem and, especially, the solution of the Yugoslav question quite impossible, there could, of course, be no hope that the Slavs would take the Austrian point of view. An Austria such as this could no longer be of any interest to them. Moreover, the defence put up against Dr. Wekerle in the Dalmatian question was much too feeble in my opinion. In conclusion, I said that it would produce a better impression to drop the passage on foreign policy altogether than to publish a declaration which was nothing but a repetition of all the hollow phrases which had already found a home in the comic papers. The Emperor ordered me to prepare a draft declaration. When I submitted it to him that same afternoon, he took a note of the main points, saying that it would be more prudent not to let the Ministers see my writing, as this would certainly not serve to diminish the ill-will already felt against me. However, in the end Seidler's draft declaration was used with only a few minor amendments. I had expected nothing else; I knew that the responsible adviser of the Crown would never dare to go beyond the "proved foundations."

The Emperor's undeniably great efforts to bring about a reorientation of the internal policy of the Monarchy, on the lines of national federalism and the union of autonomous nations in a Reich, came to grief, because he could not find any Ministers who would take the responsibility for such a change of course. My earlier confidence had already given place to a state of apathetic resignation. I had no longer any hope that the Monarchy could continue to exist, and I confined myself more and more to the strict observance of my duties, interpreted in the narrowest sense. I had opposed the Pan-German and Magyar course with all my power, so far as I could within my sphere of influence, in order to prevent the secession of the Slavs and therewith the downfall of the Empire. I gave up the struggle when I saw that I was faced with a massed superior force, compounded partly of lack of understanding and partly of determination to destroy. I was warned by personal friends that the hunt against me had begun, and that my position would soon be untenable. I received these statements and warnings with equanimity. I

saw how the Emperor was bound by the fetters of his coronation oath, and recognized that he regarded my political ideas as impracticable, even though they may perhaps have seemed to him to be right. What could the loss of office mean to me in comparison with my painful consciousness of the irretrievable ruin of my country?

My isolation at the Imperial Court became more and more obvious. I was treated with coldness and reserve. I was advised by my friends to act with the utmost caution, as I was surrounded by enemies. They became all the bolder when I myself, through a proposal which I made to the Emperor for practical reasons and which he accepted, helped to give grounds for the opinion that His Majesty's confidence in me was shaken. I had again and again suggested to the Emperor that it was an entirely unnecessary burden, which would in time become intolerable, for him to keep in his own hands the decision in the numerous departmental affairs of subordinate character, and that the most suitable course would be either to extend the powers of the Ministers, or to entrust one of the Archdukes with the settlement of certain less important business. I represented that even under the Emperor Franz Joseph the decision in many questions had been made "by Imperial Mandate" by an Archduke entrusted with the function. In the autumn of 1917, when the coming Italian offensive called for the utmost economy of time, the Emperor yielded to my repeated suggestion, and entrusted part of the Government business to his brother, the Archduke Max. In consequence, I no longer had to report to His Majesty every day, and I removed my permanent official headquarters to Vienna. From there I used to go to Reichenau, when more important business made a report to the Emperor necessary. On less important business I reported to the Archduke Max, who made the necessary decisions by Imperial Mandate. My enemies took this as a happy sign of a decline in the Emperor's confidence in me. As a matter of fact, the exact reverse was the truth, since it was now left to my discretion to decide what matters should be brought to the Emperor's attention. I sent a portfolio nearly every day to the Imperial residence, containing a report on particular occurrences, and also the daily papers, in which I marked articles and passages to which

I thought His Majesty's particular attention should be directed. I had formerly given a brief summary of the chief contents of the newspapers when I made my daily report.

#### IV

In the autumn of 1917 the Emperor Karl was preoccupied with the Yugoslav question. Various memoranda on the subject were sent to him, and he handed them over to me for study and report. But the Emperor's interest in the problem was largely personal and did not betoken any activity on the part of the Ministers, whose attitude to this vital question remained entirely passive. The Governor of Sarajevo, Freiherr von Sarkotić, who called on me at the time, had a complete grasp of the question; it was a pleasure to discuss it with him. But he was quite powerless against Freiherr von Burian, who, although he was one of the few who were theoretically masters of the Yugoslav question in all its details, nevertheless, as a supporter of the Hungarian Government, counteracted all that Sarkotić did or tried to do. The relation between these two men became more strained every day and seemed bound to come to breaking point. The head of the Military Chancery, Freiherr von Marterer, who was in regular correspondence with Sarkotić, told me that the Emperor found it very difficult to keep the peace between Burian and Sarkotić. I suggested that the relation between them might perhaps become temporarily less strained if His Majesty were to confront them at an audience. *Coram majestate* they might perhaps find it easier to come to a reasonable compromise. A few days later the Emperor discussed the Sarkotić-Burian dispute with me and I repeated the suggestion I had made to Marterer. The Emperor laughed and said: "So that idea originated with you. I was surprised when Marterer made the suggestion and could not imagine how he came by such an idea. It was so unlike him. I'll do it, although candidly I do not hope for any permanent results."<sup>1</sup> I replied that the

<sup>1</sup> I do not know whether the meeting took place. I never heard anything more about it.

subordination of the Governor of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the common Minister of Finance was one of the many anomalies of our constitutional organization. The actual result was that two officers were at the head of the administration of that country. They both pulled different ways, which was hardly an advantage. The most natural thing would be to do away with the subordination, and to give the Governor of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which provisionally were nothing but Reich lands, a seat and vote in the common Council of Ministers. But the authorities in Hungary would, of course, oppose this course. Not the very smallest change for the advantage of the Empire could be made so long as the power of the Hungarian politicians remained unbroken. With regard to the Sarkotić-Burian feud, this was not due to personal differences, but to differences of principle which had their roots in the Yugoslav problem. The Emperor then went on to discuss the general aspects of the problem. He showed himself very well-informed, but said that it was impossible to discuss the subject with the Hungarian politicians at all, while the Austrian Ministers were helpless in the question. I returned to the charge and said that there was only one way of overcoming the difficulty, and that was the dissolution of the Hungarian Parliament and the appointment of a new Government pledged to carry through universal, equal, and secret suffrage, and agrarian, fiscal, and administrative reform. In this way the balance of power in Hungary would at one blow be shifted in favour of the Crown. It would be the first step towards the solution of all the problems of the Empire. Tisza and all his followers must disappear into the abyss. That was my *ceterum censeo*. One thing I had never been able to understand; why the Croats did not diligently make displays in their Sabor. That would have been the one means of helping the Emperor out of the toils of his Hungarian coronation oath.

Very soon after this conversation, the Yugoslav question came into the forefront of politics. The Yugoslavs had decided to vote against the War Budget. I received the following letter from the Minister, Dr. Ivan von Zolger:

Vienna,

17th October, 1917.

YOUR EXCELLENCY, AND MY ESTEEMED FRIEND,

Things are not going well. They have gone so far that the South Slavs, though loyal to the core, will vote against the War Budget, and that, in consequence of the lack of understanding and the indifference which the Government displays towards the most important problem of home and foreign policy, the Yugoslav question, the number of Jugoslavs is daily increasing who expect nothing more from Austria and her bureaucratic leaders in this vital question, which gnaws at the heart of every Southern Slav, and have set all their hopes on the Entente, or on the Peace Conference. The Yugoslav Club hope that their vote, however much it goes against the grain to vote in this way, especially at the present moment, may yet shake the leaders of our policy out of their lethargy on the Yugoslav problem. I do not know whether they will succeed. I can only state that I have hitherto tried in vain to show what vital interests depend on our anticipating the Peace Conference in some way, but I have been unable to rouse anything but a theoretical interest, and have unfortunately found complete ignorance of the question in the circles whose position should have made it incumbent on them to take the initiative in setting about the task. Instead of occupying themselves seriously with this vital question of the Monarchy and its future position, our leaders are worrying about whether they can grant, on Czedik's repeated proposals, the Iron Crown of the Third Class to Mastalka, a member of the State Debt Control Board, "on political grounds," that is to say, whether it might not perhaps annoy the Germans.

Nor of course can they find time at last to bring to a final conclusion the discussions about the long overdue "guiding principles," which have repeatedly been started but always broken off again, since here too resolution and firmness are lacking and "objections" of all kinds rule the situation.

I have unfortunately been disappointed in my hopes and

have lost the fresh and happy spirit in which I used to work, all the more because every day the fact is increasingly forced on my notice that the Government is unconscious of the nature of the Austrian problem, the cardinal postulate of which culminates in the demand that the specific interests of any one nation or party should not simply be identified with the interests of the State. It will be worse for us than for anyone else if the Government becomes the tool of a particular nation or political movement.

The second reproach which the Southern Slavs make against the Government is that it does nothing to do away with the conditions which arose in the period of persecution instituted against the Southern Slavs after the outbreak of war, because the Government has given the Germans a pledge to honour these conditions as a German asset.

In this state of affairs conflict between the Yugoslavs and the Government is inevitable, and of course I too am bound to be affected. I am bound to recognize the objective justice of these two demands, for I firmly believe that we must set about—and that immediately—the solution of the Yugoslav problem, out of which the world war arose. Otherwise it would prove those who look for a solution from abroad to be in the right. Nor can I agree with a policy which, as it were, makes the preservation of grave injustice towards a true and loyal nation a plank in its political platform.

I hear that Korošec is going to give a formal explanation of the attitude of the Yugoslavs on the budget question.

With friendly greetings,

Yours sincerely,

ZOLGER.

When the Yugoslav Club in the Austrian Lower House took the decision announced in the above letter, it did not neglect to try once again to rouse the leaders from their lethargy, and to state the reasons which obliged it to adopt this attitude to the Government. I received a letter from the President of the Yugoslav Club, Deputy Dr. Korošec, in which he communicated to me the declaration prepared by the Club. It made the position as clear as day. I lost no time

in laying this letter before the Emperor accompanied by the following report:

" Most gracious Master, Deputy Dr. Korošec, President of the Yugoslav Club, has written me the enclosed letter with the deepest respect, and has enclosed the declaration of the Yugoslav Club, which was given at the session of 19th October last.

" This declaration explains the reasons for the Yugoslav opposition to the Government, and, therefore, I most respectfully beg to submit it to Your Majesty.

" Two points in particular are stressed in the declaration:

" 1. The Government's lack of interest in the Yugoslav question.

" 2. The passive attitude of the Government towards the oppression of the Slovenes due to German-National propaganda, and the lack of good will to redress the wrongs inflicted on the Slovenes at the beginning of the war.

" With regard to the Yugoslav question in the first place, this seems to me to be certainly of outstanding importance. It is, however, so intimately connected with fundamental principles of policy, here and in Hungary, and of foreign policy as well, that I dare not go beyond the most humble expression of opinion that the lack of interest in this question is a weighty reason for the opposition of the Yugoslav Club. This deficiency can only be removed by means of an Imperial instruction to the Minister for Foreign Affairs that he shall immediately institute negotiations with the Austrian and Hungarian leaders concerned for the purpose of drawing up a programme for the solution of the Yugoslav question on the lines of a constitutional union of the Yugoslavs within the Monarchy, and take the first measures towards putting the programme into effect before the meeting of the Peace Conference. In my humble opinion the matter can be settled in no other way.

" I consider it my duty, however, to direct Your Majesty's attention to the other reason for the Yugoslav



attitude, namely the alleged lack of good will on the part of the Government in the matter of remedying the many grievous wrongs, both moral and material, inflicted on the Slovenes at the beginning of the war.

"I have gone into the matter and have discovered that all these alleged persecutions and oppressions of the Slovenes, and of the Carinthians and the Styrians also, have been brought to the notice of the Reichsrat in a series of questions and interpellations. I have studied these questions and interpellations, and have got the impression that it is really in the main a case of the most appalling violence and injustice. Even if only part of the complaints are justified, it is bound to cause the Yugoslavs acute irritation to see the Government taking no legal steps to punish such illegal actions with the utmost severity. The Government may, it is true, have instituted the usual bureaucratic investigations into these questions and interpellations, but it seems to me self-evident that no result will be reached in this way.

"Since the matter at issue is in my humble opinion most important, in order to check the secession of the Slovenes, I consider that, in view of the shocking things that have been revealed to the public in the aforementioned questions and interpellations, it is necessary to abandon the bureaucratic way, which will lead nowhere, and to adopt effective methods. I believe that it would be an effective method if Your Majesty could feel graciously inclined to instruct the Prime Minister and the Minister for War immediately to make the illegal actions described in the interpellations of the Yugoslav deputies the subject of an effective investigation, to make the guilty sections of the civil and military administration responsible, to redress the moral, material and political wrongs inflicted, and to report to Your Majesty within six weeks on the strict execution of this Imperial order.

"I most respectfully beg to point out that these questions were put in the form of an 'appeal to Your Majesty,' and, therefore, call for extraordinary action and not the ordinary bureaucratic treatment. They are also very well known abroad, as accounts have been published in the

Swiss papers. In the event of the Government's not drawing any visible conclusions, a very bad effect would be produced abroad.

"Not until this debris has been cleared out of the way, will the Government have anything like a free hand in dealing with the Yugoslav question.

"To resume: the opposition of the Yugoslavs is due to:

"1. The lack of interest displayed by the Government in the Yugoslav question.

"2. The lack of good will to redress the injustice inflicted on the Slovenes (interpellations and questions).

"The secession of the Yugoslavs can be checked only if visible progress is made in these two points.

"Finally I venture to direct Your Majesty's attention to the circumstance that the Slovenes and the Yugoslavs in general, who have done their patriotic duty in the war, have suffered nothing but persecution from the various Governments, and have never, to my knowledge, or only in very exceptional cases, received any Imperial decorations. Here too there are many evils to be redressed.

"I remain, with the most profound respect,

"Your Majesty's most humble servant,

"POLZER-HODITZ."

The Yugoslav question, however, remained a problem. None of the Emperor's Ministers as much as moved a finger in the matter.

I have never been able to discover what the leader of our foreign policy really thought about the Yugoslav question; I am almost inclined to imagine he had never thought about it at all. In his published reflections, he does not, to the best of my knowledge, touch upon it at all. It never seems to have occurred to Count Czernin that the question was of great importance from the point of view of foreign policy. To him, as to many another, it was unknown ground, on which he did not dare to set foot, especially as in this area, so full of mystery for him, he might have come up against Count Tisza.

On the second point, however, I was successful. The Emperor ordered that measures should be taken on the lines I

had indicated, and that a special commission should be entrusted with the task of investigating the occurrences which had given rise to the Yugoslav questions and interpellations. Dr. von Alexy, a chief of section in the Ministry of the Interior, as the chairman of the Commission, was entrusted with the work of investigation. The German politicians lost no time in threatening Alexy. If the report were harmful to the German cause, he would pay for it with his position. But Dr. von Alexy, a most conscientious and correct official, did not allow himself to be influenced by these threats. The investigations proved that the complaints were well founded, and that the unprecedented persecution and ill-treatment of the Slovenes at the beginning of the War had been correctly reported. Dr. von Alexy drew up a comprehensive and detailed report. One might have thought that it would have had some result; but the Ministers did nothing to redress all the injustice the Slovenes had suffered, nor to make the guilty responsible. The Government had given the Germans a pledge to honour these conditions as a German asset. We were, indeed, steering the "German course" with a vengeance! The resolution passed by the German National Councillors for the Alpine Lands on 4th September, 1917, was typical of the more than peculiar attitude of the German politicians towards the ambitions of the Yugoslavs. According to this resolution they declared their complete adherence to the principles of the German Easter programme, took up a drastic position with regard to the constitutional demands of the Yugoslav politicians, and unconditionally rejected national autonomy for the southern Crown lands, because this would mean a step towards the realization of an independent Yugoslav State. By the realization of the Yugoslav demands the Monarchy would be reduced to a powerless Federal State of nationalities, and the Germans in Austria would be cut off from outlet to the sea and from the Balkans. The German National Councillors urgently demanded that Parliament should avert national autonomy within the southern Crown lands.

Thus while the Germans in Bohemia strove for national autonomy, which would have been an advantage to them there, they would not hear of it for the Alpine lands because

there it would have helped not them but the Slovenes to the attainment of minority rights. Much as I regret that the Germans of my former country have had to abandon so many of their fellow-countrymen to alien rule—only temporarily, it is to be hoped—on account of the War and the break-up of the Monarchy which followed, I cannot feel surprised at this melancholy result of their short-sighted policy. They must blame themselves, or rather their leaders, if national intolerance was in the end turned against themselves.

## V

If the Yugoslav question was the political stepchild of the Monarchy, about which no one troubled at all because its importance was not understood, the Polish question was continually becoming the object of fresh political combinations. Both in home and foreign politics it was always in the foreground of the scene. In his book, *Im Weltkrieg*, Count Czernin devotes a whole chapter to the retrospective consideration of its vicissitudes. It is in truth not a glorious page of Austrian history.

The Poles had had a firmly defined programme since the beginning of the War. They aimed at the establishment of an independent Polish State, embracing Russian Poland and Galicia, within the union of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. This programme was voted by the Assembly of Deputies at Cracow on 16th August, 1914, and was afterwards twice expressly approved by the Polish Club, once in August, 1915, after the capture of Warsaw, and again in May, 1916. Both Count Berchtold and his successor in the Ballhausplatz, Freiherr von Burian, adopted this programme. In Berlin it did not at first meet with opposition in principle, although Germany felt obliged to demand certain guarantees of a military and economic nature. The negotiations, however, never got to the stage of formal acceptance by the German Government. With regard to the constitutional form under which Poland was to be attached to the Monarchy, the intention at that time, on the proposal of Freiherr von Andrian, was that

the new Kingdom should be added to the lands and territories represented in the Reichsrat, in a manner similar to that in which Croatia was attached to Hungary. That strict upholder of dualism, Count Tisza, would not have consented to any other constitutional form. At the period when the change in the arms of the Empire was being discussed between Count Stürgkh and Count Tisza, and the latter proposed that the Bosnian arms should be quartered with those of Austria and of Hungary, he added that if things ever got so far, the Bosnian arms might be again withdrawn from those of Austria and their place be taken by the arms of Poland. It was very strange the manner in which this constitutional question was officially dealt with: the archives contain only private letters of the two Prime Ministers on the subject. Count Tisza thus regarded the accession of Bosnia and Herzegovina to Hungary in the light of compensation for the accession of Poland to Austria. That this political combination, which calmly disregarded the vital interests of the Monarchy, never came into being, is due to the fact that Baron Burian neglected the suitable moment for carrying it through, and did not approach the German Government until the cause was already lost. The annexationist school had gained the upper hand in Germany, and the German Government could not withstand the strong pressure exerted from this quarter. When Baron Burian arrived in Berlin on 16th April, 1916, to put the Austro-Polish solution (first edition) into effect, he met with a rebuff, and was obliged, *tant bien que mal*, to adopt the German programme, which provided for the establishment of an independent Polish State, but with the exclusion of Galicia. The latter was to be compensated for its exclusion by far-reaching constitutional liberties. This plan, which was in accord neither with the political wishes of the Poles nor the interests of the Monarchy, which the Slavs in Austria were bound to feel as a blow in the face, and which, therefore, was lacking in all statesmanlike acumen, was eagerly seized upon both by the German and Austrian generals, who looked upon the new Kingdom as a fresh recruiting ground. It was given definite shape by the unfortunate proclamation of the allied Emperors of 5th November, 1916,<sup>1</sup> at least to the

<sup>1</sup> In a memorandum dated 5th November, 1916, the President of the House of Lords, Prince Alfred Windischgraetz, subjected the proclamation

extent of being adopted as a programme. Truly it showed no great political perspicuity on the part of our then chief of the General Staff, Freiherr von Conrad, if he described this solution of the Polish question, as General Cramon tells us,<sup>1</sup> in a communication to the Minister for Foreign Affairs as "extremely urgent and important." We threw away our strongest trump, and obtained in return not the fifteen divisions hoped for, but incidentally about an equal number of recruits.

Thus the Polish question was already hopelessly entangled when the Emperor Karl took over the reins of government. The statesmen and advisers<sup>2</sup> of the Emperor Franz Joseph had acquiesced in the arguments of the generals, instead of opposing them as duty and wisdom dictated. Now the question came into Count Czernin's hands. He seems to have taken a peculiar pleasure in the game he played with Poland and the Poles, of alternate attraction and repulsion. It was he who kept bringing up the Polish question with the Emperor over and over again in the guise of a new plan. This did not increase his reputation for political reliability. To the early days of his tenure of office belongs the attempt made by Austria to appoint or to decide upon the Archduke Karl Stephan as regent and later King of Poland. This question was discussed on the occasion of the Emperor Karl's visit to Homburg in the spring of 1917, but at the same time Poland was offered to Germany in the event of her having to cede Alsace-Lorraine to France. Thus a German-Polish solution was put forward instead of the Austro-Polish one. Austria was to find compensation in Rumania for the loss of Galicia and the Aus-

on the establishment of an independent Poland and the Imperial holograph relating to the special position of Galicia to criticism, moderate in form but in fact very severe. It concluded with these words: "To-day, however, after I have read the two documents in question repeatedly and carefully, I am overpowered by the terrible thought that yesterday, the 4th November, 1916, there was laid to rest not only the mortal remains of Franz Thun, a man whose ambition it was to serve with all his might his Emperor and Austria, his country."

<sup>1</sup> Cramon, *Unser Österreich-Ungarischer Bundesgenosse im Weltkrieg*, page 121.

<sup>2</sup> The State documents on the subject bear the counter-signature of Dr. von Koerber. Count Adalbert Sternberg expressed himself as follows on the subject in a letter to myself: "In what infernal brain did this unfortunate idea originate? It is clear that it has failed to win over the Poles and has driven the Ruthenians into the arms of revolution."

trian territory to be ceded to Italy. But as Germany did not accept this proposal, it was agreed in May, 1917, that Poland, without Galicia, should be attached to the German Empire. Soon after this Count Czernin changed his mind once more and reverted to the Austro-Polish solution. He proceeded to Berlin in the autumn of 1917, to bring back the Kingdom of Poland. The political debacle which resulted from this enterprise found expression in the session of the Austrian Lower House on 9th November, 1917. Count Czernin who, in his complete ignorance of national feelings in our Monarchy, was never aware of the consequences of his most impetuous undertakings, and who was also unable to keep in mind the consequences of a one-sided solution of the Polish question, tried to cover up the affair afterwards by asserting that he had had no intention of bringing up the Austro-Polish question at that time; he had merely wished to prepare the way for its solution, and the affair had leaked out through an indiscretion of the German Press. Quite apart from the fact that he would certainly have been able to prevent such a leakage, it is remarkable that the (Vienna) *Neue Freie Presse* discussed in detail the extension of the Monarchy by the addition of the Kingdom of Poland in an article which had all the appearance of having been prepared. I had an opportunity of discussing the matter with the Emperor immediately before my resignation. His Majesty asked me for my views. I replied that I was not against an Austro-Polish solution in itself, but that I was very decidedly opposed to the question's being dealt with otherwise than in connection with all the other national problems of the Monarchy.

## CHAPTER XII

### MY RETIREMENT

AT the end of October, 1917, the great offensive against Italy began. The events of those autumn days in the Julian Alps are undoubtedly one of the most important military episodes of the World War, a brilliant exploit of modern warfare under the most difficult conditions, and one of the great dramas in the history of the world. For our Army, they meant the victorious conclusion of our two years' heroic defence of our soil against an enemy of superior strength. On 2nd November the valley of the Tagliamento was subdued and overrun by our troops. On 4th November Cadorna ordered a general retreat of the Italian Army behind the Piave. The forces of our disloyal and treacherous one-time ally were defeated. The Emperor visited the victorious troops at the Front several times. On 16th November he motored to Görz, and from there to Palmanuovo and Strassoldo. On the return journey by Cervernago, the mountain stream, the Torre, had to be crossed, over the dry bed of which His Majesty and his suite had crossed three days before. The Emperor, who was a stranger to fear, and, unfortunately, also to caution, thought it would be possible to cross the stream. But in a very short time the car stuck: water had got into the exhaust. Two officers, Reisenbichler and Tomek, immediately rushed to the car. The driver, First-Lieutenant Friese, asked them to carry the Emperor to the bank. The Emperor agreed. But hardly had they, carrying the Emperor between them, gone a few steps, when Reisenbichler slipped and fell, bringing the Emperor and Tomek down with him. The stream caught them and drove them sideways, fortunately against an obstacle, to which they clung. Prince Felix of Parma at once jumped into the water, followed by several chauffeurs, to aid the others in their struggle. But the current between the bank and the obstacle to which the Emperor, Tomek, and Reisenbichler were clinging, was so strong that it was soon seen that it was impossible



to save them in that way. Planks were quickly brought and laid across, and in this way all three reached dry land. The Emperor sprang on shore with a jest. The car was drawn out of the stream and the journey resumed.

I had arrived in Trieste with Konrad Hohenlohe early on 11th November. From there we travelled in the Emperor's suite to the ruins of Schloss Duino and past the fatal scenes of the terrible Isonzo battles, by Monfalcone to the Tagliamento. On both sides of the road by which we drove, one of the chief lines of the Italian retreat, lay heaped up and scattered in the ditches and fields enormous masses of war material of all kinds, guns, rifles, helmets and bayonets, munitions and food, field kitchens and lorries, corpses of horses, flags and uniforms, underclothing and boots and shoes, all in an indescribable condition. This picture was eloquent testimony to the headlong and insensate flight of the Italian Army from the area east of the Tagliamento.

By evening we were back in Trieste and in the Court train. After dinner I was sent for to report, and the Emperor gave me the details of the episode of the previous day. I implored him not always to travel in the first car, but to let an aide-de-camp precede him. This was done next day. I no longer remember where we went on the 12th. In the evening, after my report, I returned to Vienna in the company of the Prime Minister. I told him that my position had become extremely difficult, and that I was convinced that I should not retain it much longer. He confirmed my conjecture, and added that the most absurd slanders were being spread about me. The Emperor had talked about this to him that very day and expressed great displeasure.

When I returned to Vienna on 13th November, I found a mass of letters and telegrams on the subject of the Torre incident. Next day a solemn *Te Deum* was sung in the Cathedral of St. Stephen. When I got back to my office, Count Wilczek was announced. I had received the following letter from him that morning:

Vienna,  
13th November, 1917.

YOUR EXCELLENCY,

I feel compelled to give expression to my heartfelt joy at the blessed rescue of His Majesty from serious danger

to you, the man who stands nearest to our beloved Emperor.

Yours sincerely,  
WILCZEK.

Almost as soon as Count Wilczek had entered the room and shaken hands with me, he fell on his knees and prayed aloud: "Lord God, I thank Thee that Thou hast saved from danger the life of our good and beloved Emperor." Strange though the proceeding seemed to me, I was very much moved, and it left a strong impression on me. Count Wilczek, then eighty years of age, was the last representative of chivalrous romanticism, "a lonely ear of corn which the reapers had forgotten." In spite of his excellent philanthropic work in many spheres of modern social service, he was yet an anachronism in his age. His romantic creation, the Gothic fortress of Kreuzenstein, was his real setting. He always wore on his breast the gold medal for valour which he had won for heroism in 1866. Although then a *Geheimrat*, he enlisted as a private in the war against Prussia, stories of which he loved to tell. And in his breast glowed a heart full of love for his country and Emperor. The tall, erect figure of this distinguished old man was like a symbol of Austria, and at the same time of a dying world. When he rose from his prayer, he held out his hand to me and embraced me, and I had to tell him all the details of the incident.

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The Emperor was being urged on all sides to rely in future exclusively on the "trustworthy" elements in the State, to trust in the advice of reasonable people, and to unite all our forces for victory; the will to conquer, the overthrow of our enemies at home and abroad, and not submission, was the proper policy. The military success which had just been won, and the impression it had made on the enemy, clearly showed what was the only thing that counted in the War.

Glad as I was over the victory, I was equally regretful at the change of temper in Government circles which it had aroused. I could not regard these successes as anything but a passing lucky phase of the War, which I continued to believe we had already lost. In my opinion, it would have shown greater

acumen if our Government policy had not always adapted itself to the strategical position of the moment. Count Czernin, in particular, was a master of this game. He was always in a state of anxiety lest his policy should be proved false by the final result of the War. When the American danger threatened, the submarine warfare was not showing the results expected from it, the Front in the West was not advancing, and the success of the projected offensive against Italy was still uncertain, Count Czernin seemed to fear lest the War might not result in the decisive victory of the Central Powers, and he delivered speeches on peace and disarmament in Budapest. He aimed at being the leader of a peace policy. But when the military successes in Italy set in, he made an abrupt *volte-face* and began to have confidence in the ultimate victory of the Central Powers. He formed a still closer alliance with Count Tisza, and threw overboard all the domestic problems of the Monarchy. On the sterile soil of the shallow policy hitherto pursued, there was now only one road open to him, to rely exclusively on the Germans and Magyars, and to submit blindly to the leadership of the Prussian victory-peace generals. All "centrifugal tendencies" must be got rid of. In Hungary, universal suffrage, which would have helped the nationalities to gain their natural rights, had long been swamped politically, even though the Emperor personally still adhered to it. He could not be moved from the view that the suffrage should be allied with the possession of the Karl Cross; it had, however, been shown that the possessors of this decoration for distinguished service at the Front largely belonged to the "untrustworthy elements of the population," that is to say, the non-Magyar nationalities, and so the Government had left no stone unturned to put electoral reform on another, less dangerous basis, and, if possible, to stop it altogether. The Magyars put the demand for division of the Army in the foreground. That this involved a very dangerous "centrifugal tendency" seems to have been complacently overlooked by the responsible Ministers; Wekerle was even in a position to declare at a later stage of the negotiations that the Minister for Foreign Affairs had also no objection to the division of the Army.

In these circumstances it was no longer possible to believe

that the Hapsburg Empire could endure, even in the unlikely event of the ultimate victory of the Central Powers. If we lost the War, the destruction of the Monarchy was inevitable, because our unfortunate policy had entirely alienated all its friends in enemy and neutral countries, and had justified those who regarded the continued existence of the Monarchy as a permanent menace to European peace and a bulwark of Prussian military power, and who denied us both the capacity and the will to solve our national problems. If we won the War, we should have become totally dependent on the Prussian Lords, who could have counted with certainty on the help of the Magyars. It would not have required Count Czernin to bring the Monarchy into a sort of "vassal relationship" to Germany;<sup>1</sup> the "vassal relationship" would have come about automatically. We had already had a foretaste of it. During the War the "military united front" was the catchword with which the Germans ruled us; after a victorious war it would have been by means of the political united front that they would have brought us under their yoke. Both were bound to be diametrically opposed to the will of the Emperor as the sovereign ruler of Austria-Hungary. Can it be said then that we were still waging war for the great Austrian idea of reconciliation between the nations, for our own country, for the black and yellow colours of the House of Austria?

The mood of the Imperial capital was one of futile rejoicing over the Italian victories. I was depressed by the fear that these victories would only further postpone the end of the War, and that the longer the War lasted the worse would be the end. I felt more isolated than ever at the Imperial Court. I had long been looked upon as a dangerous opponent of the German-Magyar course, and people were afraid that my advice would disturb the steadiness of that course. So they made use of the change of mood to undermine my position

<sup>1</sup> According to the statements of General Cramon in the book (page 125) from which I have already quoted, Czernin said to Cramon that in return for the Austro-Polish settlement he would accept a kind of "vassal relationship" to Germany. On Cramon's remarking that the Emperor Karl would find it difficult to accept a dependent relationship to the Hohenzollerns, Czernin replied: "Leave that to me. I can easily bring the Emperor to the point." Such were the fine flowers of Czernin's policy.

and drive me from my place at the Emperor's side. The warnings which reached me became more frequent and more urgent.

On the afternoon of 21st November the Emperor again set out for the South Western Front. As I had matters to report on which would take some time, I asked for permission to accompany him on the journey. The permission was granted immediately. Next day, on the return journey, when the Court train was standing in the station at Trient, the Emperor sent for me, and greeted me with these words: "My dear Polzer, we must part for a time. The Prime Ministers and the Minister for Foreign Affairs demand your resignation, which is already in the papers, even before I have told you about it." He pointed to a newspaper which was lying in front of him, and said that it was a most barefaced indiscretion. A lot of gossip went on in the Court train, and many things reached the public by this means, but this was the worst of all. He would have the matter looked into. He assured me that he was extraordinarily sorry to have to part from me, "but believe me, it must be; during the war I cannot dismiss the Foreign Minister." I replied that I was well aware that Count Czernin was hostile to me, and that he had sheltered himself behind Tisza and Wekerle, in order to bring about my downfall in an underhand way. His game had been all the easier to play because it was well known in Hungary that I was fundamentally opposed to the policy of Tisza and Wekerle. "But," I went on, "I should consider it a great mistake for Your Majesty to dismiss him at the present juncture. The public have a high opinion of him. He has contrived to harness the Press to his car, so that if he were dismissed there would be a fear lest the people should demand back the Peace Minister against Your Majesty's will. As for me, I certainly do not desire to prevent the course now entered upon from being pursued to the end. But this course must lead to shipwreck."

At this point His Majesty interrupted me: "What do you mean? Why must it lead to shipwreck?" I went on as if there had been no interruption: "The Pan-German and Magyar course cannot in the long run hold its own against that part of the population which holds different views, and

the German alliance, which is to the advantage of the Germans and Magyars, would have demanded far-reaching concessions to the other nations if it was desired to maintain it constitutionally against a majority of those nations. It is impossible to govern both by force and constitutionally at one and the same time. Constitutionally, however, an advance can be made in Austria and Hungary only on the basis of actual equality of rights between the nations. If the predominance of the Germans in Austria and of the Magyars in Hungary is maintained, the Monarchy is bound with mathematical certainty to fall to pieces if we lose the War. Strategically, the Americans are the great danger and one grossly underestimated by the German Supreme Command; politically, the danger lies in the nationalities. It must lead to shipwreck, because another course was not taken in time, that is, because such forms of State life were not sought and found in time as would have made it possible for the nations to live together on the principle of complete equality of rights. I am afraid that we have already lost the game. But if that is not so, Your Majesty will perhaps often recur to many things I have said."

His Majesty told me that he had had a severe struggle with himself before he could bring himself to ask for my temporary resignation. "But," he went on, "there was nothing else for it. I have been threatened that the German and Hungarian troops might lay down their arms unless I decided to part with you. Dr. Wekerle demanded the establishment of a separate secretariat for Hungary if you remained the head of my secretariat. That you would not wish for yourself." I replied that in the circumstances I would naturally prefer to resign: I should never willingly be a party to helping the powers on the other side of the Leitha to carry out a political manoeuvre at the expense of the unity of the Monarchy. It was, however, characteristic of those noble gentlemen, the Magyar politicians, to try to exploit even this occasion for the further extension of their independence and thereby for the ruin of the Empire. The Emperor ordered me to take two months' leave, and added: "After your leave has expired, we can discuss the matter again. I shall send for you frequently, as I need your advice. That is no business of anybody's. I can consult anyone I like. At the end of the two

months I might assign you to the Supreme Army Command; there you would be always available. Remain quietly in your apartments in the Hofburg." His Majesty then asked me whom I thought he should appoint as temporary head of the Private Office. "He must be someone like you, who is not tied up in red tape, and who, also like you, will not allow himself to be influenced by the Government." I begged the Emperor to excuse me from giving advice; the responsibility would be too great, and my brain was not at the moment in a fit state to weigh the matter properly. The audience was broken off by the departure of the Court train at 5 o'clock. At half-past six His Majesty sent for me again, and asked me what I thought was the real reason for my removal. I replied: "The public reproach me with being responsible for the Amnesty. I am blamed for it, and it is commonly said that I am its spiritual author. This view—at least so I am told everywhere—was spread by Count Czernin, and Seidler, although he countersigned the proclamation, has not, I hear, contradicted the rumour with the necessary firmness. I have always defended the Amnesty, and I still think it was quite right. I shall never be persuaded to abandon this view, but I did not inspire it. However, I do not wish to inconvenience the Prime Minister by publishing the truth about the Amnesty." The Emperor replied: "Yes, I know all that. But people will never be persuaded to the contrary. You are shielding me, which my Ministers failed to do. Well, if the Amnesty caused your downfall, you fell in a noble cause. You could never have fallen except in a noble cause." My Emperor's gracious words still ring in my ears. They more than made up for all the malice and ill will of many of my fellow-subjects.

The Emperor also discussed the question of my future employment, and asked me whether I should be willing to accept the post of Governor of Trieste. I replied that I could not do so, because at the present time the Governor of Trieste must be a man well known to and trusted by its inhabitants. I regarded a change here as inadvisable. The Emperor offered me the Governorship of Trieste again a few weeks later, through Seidler. I again refused it. I did so after mature consideration, and regretted feeling it my duty to act

in this way for objective reasons, all the more because I had gathered from things His Majesty had said that he intended, in the event of my acceptance, to give my old friend Baron Fries-Skene, the then Governor of Trieste, a very influential position.

Painful as it was for me to be obliged to part from my Emperor, I nevertheless thought that I would no longer be able to be of great service to him in the capacity of head of his Private Office. I believed that Austria was already lost. What followed was merely the inevitable result of earlier events and failures. The Emperor had struggled with all his might to master the currents that ran counter to his aims and purposes. But these currents were too strong, and the help he got from his responsible advisers was exactly nothing.

When I got back to Vienna I discovered that articles had already appeared in the Hungarian papers full of the most shocking insinuations and slanders against me. At my farewell audience, I asked His Majesty to protect me from insults. The Emperor was indignant and promised me to order Dr. Wekerle to contradict the false accusations made against me. Before the audience, which took place at Laxenburg, the aide-de-camp told me that there was a story going about that I was to remain in my post. In spite of my definite denials, he was unconvinced of the falsity of this rumour. The farewell audience was purely formal and lasted only a few minutes.

From fresh newspaper reports from Hungary which I read carefully after the audience, I learned that the Magyars represented the affair as if my resignation had given them back their King again, that is to say, they made their loyalty conditional on my resignation. In the light of this method of influencing public opinion in Hungary, I at once telephoned to the Austrian Prime Minister and asked him to inform His Majesty immediately that I begged him not to issue the promised order to the Hungarian Prime Minister, because I thought it dangerous for the Emperor to show that he had not dropped me entirely. In the interests of the Crown, I begged His Majesty immediately to break off all communication with me; if he did not do so I feared the most harmful effects on the sentiments of the Magyars towards their King.



Seidler told me next day that His Majesty had replied that he could not grant this request of mine, and that he had already given the order to Dr. Wekerle. The order was, however, partly not carried out at all, and partly carried out by subjoining to the official denial a statement to the effect that all the reports previously published were true.

The leakage of news about which His Majesty complained on the day he asked me to resign was explained as follows: Dr. von Langenhahn, a deputy, whom I had more than once heard talked of as a political go-between between the Foreign Office, the German National Council, and the German Embassy, may have heard the news of my imminent resignation from Czernin, who was on very friendly terms with him; thus much is certain, that he called together the Press reporters in the Parliament Buildings and, as I was told by journalists, informed them of my resignation in these elegant words: "So we've got rid of old Polzer." He told them that he had heard this from a thoroughly reliable source. What this "thoroughly reliable source" was is cleared up by the following story which Count Wallis told me. It explains the leakage of the news. Before his departure for the South West Front, the Emperor asked Count Wallis to urge me to resign, but Wallis begged to be excused, because from what he knew of me he believed that I would in all circumstances prefer to hear the news from the Emperor's own lips. The evening before my resignation—I was with the Emperor on the South West Front—Count Wallis was rung up by Czernin, who asked whether Wallis had not something to communicate to him. On Wallis's replying in the negative, Czernin insisted and declared that he absolutely must have something to tell him. "I need it for the newspapers," he added. And in spite of Wallis's repeated denials, the newspapers were immediately supplied through Langenhahn with the news of my resignation. So the public learned of the resignation of the Emperor's chief secretary before the secretary himself and before the Emperor had said anything on the subject—surely a unique occurrence. I should not have mentioned the circumstances of my departure from the Imperial Court at all, as they are of quite subsidiary interest, although more than unusual in character, if they had not been so typical of the dirty way

in which the Minister of the Imperial House and Foreign Affairs set the Emperor aside. One might almost think that Czernin's object was to undermine the prestige of his Imperial master.<sup>1</sup>

As the Emperor had merely granted me leave for reasons of health, and told me several times later that he would soon be in a position to recall me, the post of head of the Private Office remained unfilled. The Director General of the Imperial Private and Family Purse, Hawerda, was made temporary Director of the Private Office.

Soon after my resignation Marterer told me that the Emperor had complained to him that since I had left office, the business of the Private Office was conducted with a formality which made his work much more difficult. He added crossly: "I was deprived of Count Polzer by all manner of intrigues."

On the occasion of my resignation I received numerous proofs of personal esteem, visits, and a mass of letters, which showed me that my modest work with the Emperor was appreciated and understood in far wider circles than I had imagined.

I obeyed His Majesty's instructions to retain the apartments in the Hofburg which had been assigned to me, which gave rise to the belief that I continued to be as before the Emperor's confidential adviser. As a matter of fact I only saw and spoke to His Majesty three times after my resignation.

<sup>1</sup> Czernin's presumption and abuse of his position reached its culminating point when, as he complacently relates in his book, he continued the Salzburg negotiations for an economic convention with Germany against the Emperor's express command. These negotiations did us harm in enemy countries.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE END

"If fate cries: 'Le jeu est fait, messieurs!' very few listen; and not until they hear 'Rien ne va plus,' do they desire to act, and then it is too late."—BÖRNE.

#### I

THE abrupt decline of the Monarchy began about the date when I resigned office. I do not, of course, mean that there was a causal connection between the two; but the persecution set on foot against me, which finally made the Emperor ask me to resign, was an infallible sign that all who remained true to the Austrian super-national idea of Empire and to dynastic interests were regarded as dangerous advisers to the Crown. When I resigned office I had no longer anyone on my side but the Emperor, who remained in his inmost heart in firm agreement with my reading of the situation, but who, being bound by the Constitution, was helpless before the superior strength of his and Austria's adversaries. The events which then followed, and which finally led by logical sequence to the destruction of the Monarchy, were nothing but the inevitable results of the unchecked efforts of these adversaries.

On 7th December the United States declared war against Austria-Hungary. Although this had no direct influence on the strategical position, nevertheless it was, on the one hand, an unfavourable symptom, and, on the other, it increased the number of the Great Powers which would be opposed to us when the time came for making peace.

The United States' declaration of war followed on the negotiations of Brest-Litovsk. I could not understand why so much importance was attached to these negotiations. A peace with the East no longer mattered, since it had already been reached *via facti*. Russia had no strength to go on fighting. It was a mistake on the part of our diplomatists to involve themselves in wholly unnecessary negotiations with

representatives of the Soviet Republic, and by so doing to recognize them as a legitimate Government. Russia was helpless; her frontiers were practically open. What reason was there for restricting our freedom of action by peace conditions? Was the advantage of concluding a peace with a beaten enemy great enough to justify the price paid for it, which involved sitting round the peace table with political adventurers and vicious fools, and thereby substantiating their position in the world? Lenin and Trotski needed a peace to maintain their pernicious power over the exhausted Russian people. If the Central Powers had declared that they would never make peace with a revolutionary Government, which could not be regarded as representative of the Russian people, and if, in the event of Lenin and Trotski's not immediately disappearing from the scene, they had advanced on Petersburg and Moscow, which certainly would have presented no great difficulty, instead of carrying on useless negotiations at Brest, without doubt the Soviet comedy would have come to a very rapid close. How clearly the Bolsheviks recognized that the spell of their power was entirely dependent on the conclusion of a peace, was shown when, at the termination of the first negotiations on 17th February, German troops in the Baltic States and Volhynia began their advance and in the course of a few days occupied Esthonia, Livonia, and almost the whole of Volhynia. The Soviet Government at once declared its readiness to sign a treaty of peace on the conditions proposed by the Quadruple Alliance at Brest-Litovsk. And although these conditions were made more severe in certain respects, the Russian plenipotentiaries signed the peace, without asking for time to consider it or making any proposals for its amendment.<sup>1</sup>

Kühlmann, the German Secretary of State, and Count Czernin certainly exerted praiseworthy skill to bring the difficult negotiations with the representatives of the Soviet Republic to a successful conclusion; but they merely swept out of the way difficulties which they themselves had quite unnecessarily created. In particular, they permitted the wholly insincere Bolshevik programme for "liberation of the nations" to be made a basis of negotiations, which betrayed

<sup>1</sup> See Helfferich, *Der Weltkrieg*, vol. iii, page 293.

them in advance into an unfavourable tactical position. That the Bolshevik programme of "self-determination and freedom of nations" was not sincerely meant, but aimed at the ruin of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and at rousing the revolutionary instincts of the peoples of Europe, must have been realized by the diplomatists of the Central Powers, since the whole world realized it. Helfferich's remarks on the subject are very pertinent (*Der Weltkrieg*, vol. iii, page 274):

"A glaring light is thrown on the insincerity of Trotski's advocacy of pure and unadulterated self-determination, protected from all undue influence and pressure, and expressed by a free and universal plebiscite, for the nationalities of the occupied areas, by the behaviour of Bolshevik Russia to those parts of Russia which refused to accept Bolshevism. While Mr. Trotski at Brest-Litovsk was proclaiming the will of the people expressed in a free plebiscite to be the highest standard of national life, his Government at Petersburg violently disbanded the constitutional National Assembly elected by the free vote of the people the very day after it had assembled (20th January, 1918). Apart from the unprecedented terrorism which the Bolshevik leaders practised in Soviet Russia itself, they attempted, in districts which, as the Russian Government itself must have recognized, wished to separate from Bolshevik Russia, as had been shown by the impeccable exercise of the right of self-determination, such as Finland and the Ukraine, to beat down self-determination with fire and sword, terrorism, and violence of all kinds, and to maintain or restore Bolshevik domination against the will of the majority of the population."

If the diplomatists of the Central Powers had not recognized the insincerity of Trotski and Co. earlier, it must have become perfectly clear to them during the negotiations. It would have been wise to have turned the tables upon them, to have adopted the programme of liberation for the nations, and, after remonstrating with them for their previous actions, to have declared that they were prepared to conclude peace with the Russian people on the basis of this programme, but only through honest mediators, and not through agents who were

deceiving the nation in their own lust for power. Count Czernin, however, was absolutely determined to bring home a peace, in order that the Germans might march into Paris; this, in his opinion, would mean the real peace. This, too, was a great mistake, since American aid for the Entente was close at hand. If Trotski had returned to his comrades without a peace, Russia would have been delivered from a bloody scourge and the world from a terrible menace. However, the Peace Treaty with Russia was signed on 3rd March. For the Central Powers the advantages resulting from it were not much greater than they would have been without any peace treaty. For the Russian revolutionary Government, however, the treaty was the vital condition of its existence. The Soviet Republic had brought peace to the Russian people, and had put an end to the terrible suffering of a four years' war, to which Tsarism had set the torch. That was a demagogic formula which has not yet lost its spell.

With regard to peace with the Ukraine the case was quite different. Peace with the Ukraine would, it was claimed, save us from the menace of famine. The people of the Ukraine did not want to have anything to do with Soviet Russia, and were prepared to conclude a separate peace immediately. In virtue of a decision of the Crown Council,<sup>1</sup> Czernin was empowered to conclude peace with the Ukraine on the basis of the bi-partition of Galicia. Our Foreign Minister further facilitated the conclusion of peace, it is generally maintained, by taking the advice of the Austrian Deputy, Baron Nikolay Wassilko, whom he had summoned to Brest, and allowing the Ukraine to make the desired annexation of the Government of Kholm. Thus Czernin made up for his own lack of diplomatic skill by simply paying for the peace out of the pockets of the Poles. Was Czernin at all conscious that he thus made relations between us and the Poles impossible? In Cracow the houses were draped in black, and the theatres and cinemas closed as a sign of mourning. The Poles were furious. The Austrian Government majority,

<sup>1</sup> The Council in question took place at Laxenburg on 22nd January, 1918, under the chairmanship of the Emperor, and lasted from 5.45 to 7.30 p.m. Czernin, Burian, Stöger-Steiner, Arz, Seidler, and Wekerle were present. Before the Council met Czernin had been received by the Emperor in an audience which lasted an hour.

always uncertain, was endangered. However, the food supply appeared to be improved. Vienna was wild with jubilation over the Peace. The mere word meant joyful hopes. Czernin, who arrived in Vienna on the afternoon of 13th February, had ordered a reception by the Burgomaster at the station. Czernin had won fame cheaply, the Austrian Prime Minister had the trouble, but Vienna had bread, or at least thought she would have it.

These expectations, however, were not completely fulfilled. The Ukraine pledged itself to deliver at least one million tons of grain by 1st August, 1918; but it turned out that the Ukraine itself was suffering from a shortage of supplies, and that Kiev and Odessa were faced with a bread crisis. Up to 1st November, 1918, only about 20,000 wagon-loads of foodstuffs were delivered to Austria. It must, however, be admitted that the difficult question of the food supply was undoubtedly hopeless at the time of the conclusion of peace with the Ukraine. On pages 322 *et seq.* of his book, *Im Weltkrieg*, Czernin publishes a telegram which he sent to His Majesty from Brest-Litovsk. He refers in it to the "apprehensions" which he had expressed on the food supply question, and lays stress on the fact that they proved justified. He reproached the Austrian Ministers with frivolity and incompetence, and expressly referred to the failure of supplies from Hungary. But he forgot that he himself had stopped up the source from which food might have reached Austria from Hungary. He did not see that there was a political system behind Hungary's refusal to send further supplies, and that this was maintained solely by the power of the strongest man in Hungary, his friend Count Tisza. Complete information about the food supplies in Hungary was concealed by all the political means at the disposal of the Hungarian leaders, in the interests of those who had formerly, in peace time, benefited by the closing of the customs-frontiers against Serbia and Rumania, as a practical demonstration of the independence of Hungary, and, finally, in order to weaken Austria to the utmost extent and to keep her dependent on Hungary or rather Hungary's leaders. Count Czernin himself was the protector of the power of the Magyars by his firm alliance with Tisza. It was his duty to have opposed that system with

all the means at his disposal—and these were not slight—and to have forced Count Tisza, who even after his downfall remained the one decisive influence in Hungary, to open the granaries of the large estate owners. But this unpleasant task he left to the Emperor, who on account of his oath was helpless against Hungary while Tisza remained in power. What availed the commands of the crowned King, bound by his oath, when the uncrowned King refused to obey? Count Czernin accuses the Austrian Ministers of "frivolity and incompetence," and never thinks that he himself was the chief culprit. If Count Czernin had been Prime Minister of Austria at that time, I would wager a thousand to one that in similar circumstances he would have put all the blame on the "frivolity and incompetence" of the Minister for Foreign Affairs. The hopeless position, which might have partly excused the bad peace, was also in great measure due indirectly to Czernin. He discharged his task in the simplest fashion conceivable, by acceding to all the demands made by the Ukraine. When this peace was concluded, the Emperor was on a railway journey through Hungary. The pleasure he felt at the news was due to liberation from the threat of famine.

## II

I had not seen the Emperor since my resignation. Quite unfounded rumours were in circulation that I was still his confidential adviser. I was visited by many politicians and statesmen, who asked me to intercede for them. I always declared quite truly that I had no communication whatever with His Majesty, and that I was the last person to have any influence in any matter. When the Emperor commanded me to appear in audience on 14th February, 1918, I believed that he wished to make final arrangements about my position, because my leave was about to expire. I proceeded to Baden. To my great pleasure I encountered Aulic Councillor Lammasch in the little aides-de-camp's room in the *Kaiserhaus*. His audience was fixed for five o'clock. He told me that he had been in Switzerland, and that he had spoken with an agent



of Wilson's, and a few days later with his official plenipotentiary. It was open to us to come nearer to peace, if we would make a declaration on disarmament, the guaranteeing of national autonomy, and Belgium. Lammasch was of opinion that the last point would present difficulties for us. I disputed this on the grounds that we belonged to the guarantee powers, and that ultimately we need only appeal to the words uttered by Bethmann-Hollweg on the subject of Belgium in the German Reichstag on 5th August, 1914. While we were talking, Prince Konrad Hohenlohe was with His Majesty. It was a quarter to seven when he left the Emperor's study and Lammasch went in. Space was very limited in the *Kaiserhaus* at Baden, where Their Majesties spent the winter of 1917-1918. The children's play-room was next to the aides-de-camp's room. About seven o'clock the door between was opened slightly, and I heard the Empress's voice asking the aide-de-camp to tell His Majesty that it was late, and to ask him to come in for a moment to say good-night to the children, as he had not seen them all day. Soon afterwards Lammasch came out, and the Emperor went to see the children. After a few minutes he sent for me. He asked how I was, told me to sit down and said: "Forgive me, if I can only give you a short time. I am terribly busy. I only wanted to ask your opinion on a political affair. Count Czernin now needs national autonomy. When you advocated it, it was a crime; now it has all at once become necessary and urgent. It is to be carried out by means of an Imperial Ordinance? Do you think this is a good plan?"

I replied that an Imperial Ordinance could only be employed after the adjournment of the House. But it was certainly to be expected that the public would very soon and very definitely call for the re-summoning of Parliament. Then the old House would sit in judgment on the Imperial Ordinance. Accordingly, I considered that an Imperial Ordinance would serve its purpose only if the House were first dissolved and a new electoral law were promulgated by Imperial Ordinance, which electoral law would have to be such as to afford a possibility of carrying through elections easily and rapidly. The great obstacle which would wreck any innovation was the House as at present constituted. The

new electoral law must be based on proportional representation, in order to exclude the national-chauvinist parties so far as possible, and to put the House on a social foundation. I briefly explained the nature of the proportional representation system and the possibility of holding elections even in time of war. The Emperor, as I gathered from the questions he threw in, quickly grasped the advantages of such an electoral system. I stated that a House elected on this basis would bring greater understanding to the problem of the reorganization of the State than the present Parliament, which had become quite unmanageable. At one time the granting of national autonomy would have sufficed. It would have been a plant capable of growth and development. Now it was no longer sufficient. The words of Heraclitus, *πάντα ῥεῖ*, applied to politics. What was adequate yesterday was out-of-date today. We must now dig deeper.

The Emperor instructed me to commit my proposals to writing, and to do it quickly, because everything must be done with speed. He would give the document to Seidler, but he must read it himself first. He told me not to sign it and to have it typed. "With regard to your own affairs, we will discuss them later. You know, my dear Polzer, that I haven't forgotten you." When I remarked that my leave would expire in a few days, the Emperor asked me whether I would accept the post of Governor of Vienna. In any case we must wait to see how things would develop as a result of my proposal; I might also enter the Cabinet if the Poles remained in Opposition and resigned. I replied that in the event of my proposal's attaining to the stage of realization, I would regard it as my duty to work for it in a responsible position in the Council of Ministers. I composed a memorandum embodying my proposals and sent it to His Majesty on 17th February, 1918, in a sealed envelope marked: "To be opened by His Imperial Majesty in person." That same evening I called on Seidler, who seemed somewhat disconcerted at first; he no doubt thought I had come to urge my personal interests. I quieted his fears by informing him of what His Majesty had said, and by telling him that he would receive a memorandum of mine from His Majesty in the course of the next few days, of the contents of which I wished

to give him a brief summary. Seidler listened attentively and discussed the subject thoroughly with me. I heard nothing more of the matter after that conversation with Seidler.

### III

At Brest, Czernin, under the influence of the German representatives, with whom he was in constant contact, seems to have changed his political course in the direction of a victory peace. In his mind's eye he saw the Germans marching into Paris, and hoped that in this way the Central Powers would compel the conclusion of peace. I do not intend to criticize this political view, even although events proved it to be wrong. As a result of this change of heart, however, Czernin's relations with the Emperor became much worse. The Minister discussed this very freely in private conversations not only with friends, relations, and equals, but also with politicians. One heard the utterances of the Minister of the Imperial House on his Emperor repeated everywhere, and the impression gained was that Czernin blamed the Emperor for all the weakness of our policy, while all that was strong in it he claimed for himself. Thus, from an official source, as it were, the public only too soon became familiar with a distorted picture of the Emperor Karl, which supplied most useful material to the lying propaganda of the Pan-Germans. I received a steady supply of information from many sources which, although sometimes slightly inconsistent in detail, yet made the position quite clear: under cover of the "German course," entered upon by Count Czernin at that time (end of the winter of 1918), and of his self-avowed differences with the Emperor, a syndicate of German agents had been formed in Vienna which systematically carried on zealous propaganda work on Pan-German lines by means of spreading fabricated, or at least untrue, reports against the interests of Austria and her dynasty. In addition to the chief actors, who included the German Ambassador, Count Wedel, a number of smaller fry, Austrian deputies, journalists, and even detectives from Berlin, took part in the work. The syndicate

mainly supplied German papers with lying reports directed against Austria and the dynasty with such virulence that a prohibition against sending many of these newspapers—including, if my memory serves me, the *Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten*—to Austria by post had to be issued. But Austrian newspapers, for example, *Österreichische Volkswirt* (Stolper), the *Deutsche Volksblatt* (Patzelt), and the *Fremdenblatt* (Bercht) were also at the service of this propagandist centre. The object of this subversive movement, which originated with the German heavy industry, the *Vaterlandspartei* and the Supreme Army Command, and which was supported by the *Gustav-Adolf Verein* and the *Evangelischer Bund*, was to prevent any reorganization or rehabilitation of Austria under any circumstances and by any means, in order to reduce Austria to impotence, to make her economically entirely dependent on Germany, and to discredit the Crown. Then unexpected light was thrown on the darkness in which these proceedings were enveloped, so far as the public was concerned. The session of the House of Lords of 28th February, 1918, illuminated, as with a searchlight, the state of feeling in influential political circles. The diplomatic blunder of Count Czernin in the matter of the Kholm Government at the conclusion of peace with the Ukraine seemed, to his admirers, to call for some action to reinforce his prestige. The Constitutional and Central Parties of the House of Lords introduced a resolution in the form of an urgent motion, which was a vote of confidence in Count Czernin. The flourishing Pan-German propaganda could not do without Czernin, so powerful officially and so influential with the Press, especially as they were united on one point, the propaganda against the Emperor. In the debate the Poles violently attacked Count Czernin. But all the other speeches were pæans of praise for Czernin's statesmanlike exploit, the conclusion of peace with the Ukraine. Peace was necessary and could not have been attained without the surrender of the Kholm Government. That was the tenor of all the speeches. Granted that the surrender was necessary, then it was due to no merit of Czernin's that peace was concluded, since he had given way on all points. A peace of this kind was not a statesmanlike exploit; it could have been accomplished any day *entre crépuscule et soir*. But this the gen-

tlemen refused to see; they had other fish to fry. They were determined to take the field against the Emperor or against his well-known peace policy; they wanted to hit the Emperor by expressing their confidence in Czernin, whose deviation towards the course of the victory-peace generals was well known. This was clear from the speech of Dr. Pattai. If it had not been such a melancholy sign of the vanishing of old Austrian sentiments, "one would have been tempted to call it thoroughly stupid." "We have long had enough of the words 'without annexations or indemnities,'" stated Dr. Pattai at the beginning of his speech, thereby receiving the first enthusiastic applause of the House. He spoke in favour of war to a victorious end. He openly advocated the annexation of the Russian border states: it was a "piece of folly" to demand that "we"—he meant of course the Germans in the German Empire—should give up the occupied districts. The line to Bagdad must be assured [*sic!*]. Germany must insist on the annexation of the Flemish part of Belgium, Antwerp as far as Riga, "as the great national economist List demanded more than seventy years ago." He waxed enthusiastic about the "position in the world" to which we should thereby attain, and said that then—truly a somewhat wide detour—we need no longer be apprehensive about Trieste. Against the great advantages that would accrue to us from all this, he set the peace policy inaugurated by the Emperor Karl—no name was mentioned—and amid the enthusiastic approval of the House, he stigmatized such a policy as not only "feeble," but as "enormous folly." The speech, which was intended as a defence of Count Czernin, contained a number of scarcely veiled attacks on the Emperor, which roused enthusiastic applause from the House of Lords. The peroration: "We are the victors, and we demand the palm of victory," was followed by tumultuous applause which I thought would never end. I was present at the session, and was not a little amazed at the almost incredible extent of the political *naïveté* and lack of judgment displayed not of course by Dr. Pattai, whom I knew quite well, but by the many members of the House of Lords who applauded him. Dr. Pattai's words were, of course, of no consequence, as his name was quite unknown abroad, and he had no great reputation even at home.

But the approval of the House of Lords, I thought, could not remain unanswered by those who were bound to condemn the speech on account of the veiled attacks on the Emperor. I was convinced that some of the paladins of the Throne would rise and defend the Emperor's peace policy from these violent attacks. But I was mistaken. The speakers who followed said not a single word in defence of the Imperial policy. It was not until a late hour that one man rose and had the courage to enter the lists for the policy of peace and reason, the policy of the Emperor. This was Aulic Councillor Lammasch. With his very first words he exposed the sentiments at the root of Pattai's speech by remarking pertinently that it was the speech of an advocate of the "Rhenish-Westphalian heavy industry." He advised the way of peace, supported the Emperor's point of view, which he knew well, and defended him against the crowd of opponents sitting round him. He had been in neutral countries. There, in contrast to the great sympathy and admiration felt for our Emperor, people regarded Count Czernin rather sceptically; but, in contrast to the censure passed abroad on other rulers and the statesmen of other countries, they comforted themselves with the thought that in a Monarchist State foreign policy was decided not by the Minister, but by the ruler, and, as already mentioned, they had the greatest confidence in our ruler. He went on to speak of the alliance with Germany, and approved of our fulfilling our obligations as her ally. In connection with the parallel which Count Czernin had drawn between Strassburg and Trieste, and with what he said about defending the pre-war territorial position, Lammasch said that the Monarchy was pledged to fight for the maintenance of Alsace-Lorraine within the union of the German Empire. But he added that we were not pledged to continue the war merely in order to maintain a certain constitutional position within the Empire.

"If peace is possible on the condition that Alsace-Lorraine becomes an independent federal State, with all the rights of a federal State and a constitution freely chosen by the population, then there is no reason for our carrying on the war in order that Alsace-Lorraine may remain a Reichs-

land with a predominately Prussian administration. And there are signs that the other side would be content with this concession. There have been great changes in the views of the Entente in this connection. There is no longer any word of disannexation in the various declarations, especially those made by England and the United States. Lloyd George has even spoken of a reconsideration of the question of Alsace-Lorraine, and in an earlier speech, although the context was certainly not perfectly clear, he said that the Alsace question was not a territorial question. Wilson's latest statements might also be interpreted in this sense. In view of our relations, such a solution, namely, Alsace-Lorraine as an independent federal State, would be particularly in harmony with our conceptions. It is our duty to give the various nations in Austria a greater measure of 'self-government'; only in this way can we consolidate our position."

In conclusion Lammasch again advised the House to work for peace, for which the prospects were good if we did not reject the hand Wilson held out to us. His speech, which was inspired by the spirit of the Emperor Karl's peace policy, fell like a drop of wormwood into the panegyrics on Count Czernin, which had resounded through the House, and was continually interrupted by cries of derision. Count Dominik Hardegg even went so far as to call the defender of the Emperor's peace policy "an advocate for the Entente." This phrase at the time formed part of the vocabulary of all the political illiterates. The whole scene was manifestly a kind of *fronde* against the Emperor and against the one man who had risen to support his peace policy. On the conclusion of Lammasch's speech, the whole House echoed with the cry: "We want war and victory." Such was the temper of the Austrian Upper House a few months before the total collapse of the German and Austrian armies. But it must be allowed that the House of Lords made a complete job of it. To crown the scene and to leave the feelings of the House beyond all doubt, Prince Schönburg rose and declared, in the name of the Centre Party, "that the speech which Aulic Councillor Dr. Lammasch has delivered to-day is in many passages opposed

to our sentiments and views." In particular, he thought it his duty to point out that that part of Dr. Lammasch's remarks which dealt with the internal conditions in the German Empire ought never to have been delivered in the House. We could not permit others to interfere in our domestic affairs, and equally we ought not to presume to interfere in the affairs of another State, especially in such a way as Dr. Lammasch had done to-day in the case of a State to which we were bound by such close ties as Germany. Prince Schönburg and his party, like the Constitutional Party, which made similar objections through Freiherr von Plener, were thus of opinion that an ally must renounce all independence of judgment. This was a dangerous confusion between an alliance and a vassal relationship. Would the German Empire have ever considered itself pledged to reject a peace—and Lammasch's remarks were meant for such a contingency—which we, for example, had refused to accept, because we were opposed to the establishment of the South Tyrol as an independent province? Did not Prince Bülow demand far greater sacrifices from us in 1915, and even, as German Ambassador, negotiate behind our backs and against our will with the Italian Government on the subject of territory which had belonged to us for more than 500 years? Prince Schönburg might perhaps have uttered such a protest in the Prussian Upper House. In the Austrian Upper House the effect produced was that of a vassal prostrate before the powerful lord of the manor. This session of the House of Lords was a milestone on the road which led to the abyss, an infallible symptom of Austria's mortal malady. The terrible effect it produced on men who knew the Emperor and his clear and honourable intentions, may be judged from the fact that the Emperor's former tutor, Count Georg Wallis, who was present as a member of the Upper House, was seized with a stroke during the session, from which he was long in recovering.

I was very sorry that Prince Schönburg, whose loyalty was beyond all doubt, played such an unfortunate part at this session—it was certainly done under the influence of others and in pursuance of a party resolution—all the more so because I knew that the Emperor Karl had great confidence in him. Moreover, as commander of a corps he had done excellent



service, as was recognized by all, even in foreign countries, and had displayed heroic courage in the front ranks on the field. The Emperor Karl had even intended to appoint him Prime Minister in the event of internal disturbances, and Field-Marshal Lieutenant Baron Bardolff, Minister of the Interior. The Emperor had conceived this idea in January, 1918, when strikes broke out in Wiener-Neustadt and Neunkirchen, which soon assumed a menacing, almost revolutionary character.

#### IV

Internal policy in the realms and territories represented in the Reichsrat, after the crisis caused by the Polish question, very soon relapsed again into dullness and lethargy. But the work of undermining the foundations of the Monarchy went steadily on. In December, 1917, immediately after my resignation, the question of the division of the Army was raised by Hungary. On the morning of 4th December a conference took place under the chairmanship of the Emperor on the subject of supplying reserves for the Army, at which the Minister for War, Stöger-Steiner, the Austrian Minister of National Defence, Czapp, and, as representatives of Hungary, Generals Hazai and Szurmay, were present. In the afternoon the question of the "rehabilitation of the Army," put forward by Szurmay, was discussed. Szurmay, who was noted or rather notorious as a great Hungarian chauvinist, and was regarded as Tisza's mouthpiece in military affairs, was the only one who was in favour of the division of the Army. The Emperor, however, said that a solution of the Army question could not be broached until constitutional questions had been settled. And with this proposal for postponing consideration of the matter, he put off the discussion to a later date. He was of opinion that it would, however, come to trialism, as the solution of the Yugoslav question was unavoidable. But the Hungarian leaders and politicians did not give way. They kept hammering away at the Common Army, that pillar of the Monarchy. The Austrian Government put forward grave objections. Dr. Zolger declared that the division of the Army

would mean the reinforcement or even the perpetuation of dualism, and thus a final abandonment of any solution of the Yugoslav question. He urgently warned the Governments against this course. The Emperor remained unshaken in the view that it was impossible to think of a definite settlement of the Army question until after the War, as constitutional questions must undergo important amendments, and it might, perhaps, come not only to trialism, but also to a further measure of federalization.

On 6th January, 1918, a conference took place under the chairmanship of His Majesty, to which the Minister for War brought Professor Kelsen, an authority on constitutional law, who on his instructions had worked out certain guiding principles for the consideration or solution of the Army question. The Emperor approved these principles and instructed the Minister for War to negotiate with the Austrian and Hungarian Governments on the basis of these guiding principles, on his own responsibility and without appeal to an Imperial order. The object of this procedure was further to postpone the consideration of the question, and at the same time to make it possible for the Hungarian Prime Minister to calm the importunate Hungarian deputies by an announcement that negotiations on the question were in progress between the two Governments. But the Emperor was not satisfied with these steps. He considered it necessary to be able to bring strong arguments to bear against the Hungarian Government. Certain of success, he summoned a "council of marshals," which met on 9th January, 1918. They met at half-past eleven in the *Kaiserhaus* at Baden, after a short lecture by the Minister for War on the position of the Army question. The following were present: the Archdukes Eugen and Josef, and Generals Conrad, Krobatin, Kövess, Boroević, Böhm-Ermolli, Wurm, Křitek, and Scheuchenstuel. His Majesty submitted the following questions for their expert opinion:

1. Whether it would be useful at the present juncture to issue a declaration on the projected alterations in the organization of the Army.
2. Whether the proposed alterations would be beneficial.

With the exception of the Archduke Josef, who regarded the division of the Army as necessary and inevitable for political reasons, all the rest of those present were vigorously opposed to any such division. The council lasted barely half an hour. The Emperor was satisfied: he now had a new and powerful argument against the chauvinistic Magyar ambitions. The Army question was removed from the sphere of direct anxiety, if not from that of dangerous aspirations. It was not until the days of storm which preceded the catastrophe, when political passions, combined with anxiety about the fate of the home-coming soldiers, rose to boiling point, that the demand for an independent Army again came into the limelight, in the form of a self-evident necessity arising out of events. The first act of the Hungarian national representatives with an independent army at their disposal was a unanimous demand that the Hungarian troops should be recalled. The demand was put forward not only by Károlyi and the rest of the schemers, but by the whole House, including Tisza's National Work Party. This unanimous resolution was translated into action, and led to the disintegration of the Front and the whole army.

## V

Subsequent events deprived the negotiations with Rumania of all importance. They had no influence on the downfall of the Monarchy. They merely afforded fresh and eloquent testimony of our impotence and weakness in face of Berlin and Budapest. In the speech on his policy during the War which he delivered to the Political Association on 16th December, 1918, Count Czernin used the following words:

“The Brest and Bucharest Protocols show that I was forced from my course by the opposition of the Germans at Brest and by that of the Hungarians at Bucharest. I do not for one moment deny that. In both cases I had the choice either of remaining and mitigating the differences as far as possible by my intervention, or of going and there-

by further complicating the situation. I chose the first alternative at Brest, because I believed that a change would not lessen but increase the difficulties. At Bucharest I preferred the second alternative, because I had become convinced that the forces in league against me would make it impossible for me to attain my ends."

To this should be added that Czernin had alienated the Poles by the secret agreement with the Ukraine, and, accordingly, no longer disposed of a majority in the Delegations. He was *au fond de son sac*. There was nothing for him to do but resign. He then delivered that strange speech to the Vienna Municipal Council, described in an earlier chapter, in which he—this will always remain incomprehensible—challenged Clemenceau without any reason, and told the Slavs the "truth." The content and consequences of this speech were like the application of dynamite to the structure of the Monarchy.<sup>1</sup> The dynasty was so severely shaken that it never recovered. I was at my country place in Hungary when the explanations and counter-explanations of the two statesmen, which followed Czernin's challenge to Clemenceau, were holding the whole world in suspense. I returned to Vienna on the day of Czernin's resignation. The atmosphere was far worse than I had imagined it would be. The Press, which for obvious reasons supported Count Czernin, was bursting with pæans of praise for the retiring Minister, and was carrying on a diabolical campaign against the Throne, which everybody understood, in this the only possible way. The misguided populace applauded the comedy, and thus ruthlessly condemned the defenceless Emperor. It was as if everything regarded as sacred in Austria was being dragged through the mud. I thought of the words which Madame de Thèbes<sup>2</sup> used in her Almanack for the year 1917: "*... des foules joyeuses ont paru, portant des drapeaux, chantant des airs de liberté et traînant dans les rues l'écusson des Hapsbourg.*"<sup>3</sup> There was a

<sup>1</sup> Two reports belonging to this period are very illuminating, one an official Prague report, and the other a private report from Hungary. They are printed in Appendices XIV and XV.

<sup>2</sup> Not that I regard Madame de Thèbes as a prophetess, but merely as a woman initiated in the political programme of a world organization.

<sup>3</sup> "Joyful crowds appeared, carrying flags, singing songs of freedom and dragging the escutcheon of the Hapsburgs through the streets."

hail of applause for Czernin; the German Emperor—it was intended as a display—conferred on him the Iron Cross of the First Class. In the Army and among the nobility things were said which made one blush with shame. Members of the House of Lords, regardless of the disapproval of their distinguished President, Prince Windischgraetz, and forgetting entirely that they had no one behind them but the Emperor they were attacking, felt it their duty to send a “warning” to the Crown. In the end the Emperor Karl was morally compelled to take sides against himself. The draft of a holograph letter of farewell to Count Czernin was submitted to him, which was full of exaggerated praise, and the style of which was truly appalling. Quite apart from the fact that it showed very little feeling for the German language on the part of the composer, in content it was entirely off the track: it was not even remotely true to the political position and temper, and was likely to add to the confusion of public judgment. The Emperor’s signing of this document can only be explained by his wish not to make it appear as if he were taking his own side in his own cause.

It was a very great pity that in this most troubled time there was no one at His Majesty’s side with an unbiassed view of the position, who could have told him that a large, if not the largest part of the population, regarded his peace efforts of the spring of 1917 in quite another light from the Pan-Germans and victory peace fanatics, who were loudly crying “treachery,” who worked up the Sixtus letter of a year before into a State affair of the first importance, and made of it a welcome opportunity to lower in the estimation of the public this peace-loving Hapsburg they found so extremely inconvenient. The Emperor would then have learned that thousands and tens of thousands to whom the War had brought poverty and grief, who in their misery were longing for peace, approved of his attempt to reach peace, and would have stood by him if he had declared: “Yes, I wrote the letter, because I wished to put an end to bloodshed and to give peace to the nations. I wrote it out of love for the people, whom the War has reduced to misery. I wrote it, because I put humanity above statesmanship, and because I thought that I should be doing the greatest act of friendship to my ally, the German Emperor, if I sup-

ported him in his similar struggle for peace against the obstinacy of a handful of men who wished to prolong the War." If the Emperor had only had an adviser at his side at that time who, uninfluenced by the persuasions of Pan-German propaganda, would have entered the lists for the interests of Austria and her Crown, the Emperor would certainly never have despatched to the Emperor Wilhelm the famous telegram: "My guns will give the answer."

This telegram marked a decisive turn of events. It disappointed those who had approved of the Emperor's peace measures, and it cut the ground from beneath the feet of the Hapsburg Empire's last defenders in enemy and neutral countries. At this instant—this is not conjecture but historical fact <sup>1</sup>—the Czechs and the Jugoslavs became the declared

<sup>1</sup> In January, 1918, a Czech deputy of the most radical persuasion paid me a visit. He did not come without having taken preliminary precautions. He first put out feelers, asked various people to mediate and generally acted with the greatest discretion. No one was to be told of his visit to me. He informed me, not in his private capacity but in the name and as the representative of many of his fellow-countrymen who shared his views, that he had come to tell me that the Czechs would never negotiate with the Seidler Government, but me they would meet half-way. I was the only one of the men in close touch with the Emperor whom they trusted. The threatened secession of the Slavs could still be prevented. The Czechs wished to remain united to Austria: it would not be so very difficult to come to agreement with them if a real desire to do so existed. He implored me to take over the Government, and then things might still go well. I thanked him for the confidence which he and his countrymen expressed in me, but said it was quite impossible for me to offer myself as prime minister to His Majesty. Besides I had now no relations with His Majesty. I had once already refused to accept the office of prime minister. The obstacles still existed, for in my view the dualistic form of government was the obstacle. So long as no change was made in the direction of the Foreign Office and the Government of Hungary nothing could be hoped for. He assured me that the matter was not so difficult as it was generally supposed to be; he would leave it to me to decide what steps should be taken in view of the information he had given me. At the beginning of October, 1918, when I was President of one of the Senates of the Administrative Court, the same Czech deputy appeared in my office, this time even without being announced, in a state of visible agitation. He said that he had previously come to me on a mission, now he came personally to fulfil a human duty. If the call to form a government were to come to me now, the Czechs would be unable to negotiate with me. He had felt it his duty to warn me, as I might go on believing that the former assurance still held good. To-day it was too late, as the establishment of an independent Czech Republic was a fact already decided on. He told me how it had come about. His

allies of the Entente. It was the hour in which "German-Austria" was born.

Seidler further set his seal on the carrying out of the Pan-German programme by quite unnecessarily proclaiming the "German course." Was any other open to him, the "leafless trunk"? Now began the era of the flourishing of the "German National Union." It devoted itself with all speed to the Tratenau District Court and the "deepening of the German Alliance." There was now nothing to prevent it. Deputies Pantz, Teufel, and Langenhahn became the advisers of the first German-Austrian Prime Minister. They sunned themselves in their imaginary power. This led to the grotesque situation that, while the Slavs were proclaiming their secession from Austria, in a neighbouring room in the Houses of Parliament the Pan-German deputies were deliberating on the question of the Tratenau District Court in all its details. The event had happened which the Pan-Germans, after the Italians and the Serbs the greatest enemies of the Hapsburg Monarchy and its dynasty, had long been hoping for, and which was foreseen in their party programme for the year 1859. This programme stated that the Party "takes no account" of Austria. It must wait for the time when this Empire would be split asunder into its provinces by a national movement. Then the German-Austrian provinces would automatically fall to the share of Germany.<sup>1</sup> Only the last point on the programme remained unfulfilled. An Austrian had nothing more to seek. One fine day a few Pan-German deputies betook themselves to Seidler and announced that they would regard my appointment as Governor of Vienna or to any other important post as an insult, since I had inspired the Amnesty and . . . the Sixtus letters. Their true opinion they could not very well express.

In spite of his "German course" Seidler was unable to retain his position as Prime Minister. But the Pan-Germans

story was very interesting, but I had had such a shock that I could only listen with half an ear and an abstracted mind. This much, however, I do remember: the telegram to the Emperor Wilhelm had driven the last Austrophile Czechs into the enemy camp.

<sup>1</sup> Programme of the National Liberal Party, printed in the *Dresdener Journal* for the year 1859. This demand was also put forward by Giuseppe Mazzini, that great hater of Austria.

permitted him to become head of the Emperor's Private Office. I had had to retire from this office, because it was imagined that I inspired the Amnesty. But no objection was made when Seidler, who, as the responsible head of the Government, had incited or approved the Amnesty, hastened its proclamation and countersigned the holograph letter accompanying it, was appointed to the selfsame post.

My definite dismissal from the post of head of the Private Office followed. When I went to thank the Emperor for the order which he conferred on me on this occasion, His Majesty told me that no provision had been made for conferring an order on me in the draft of the holograph removing me from my post; he had had to give instructions that the holograph should be supplemented by a paragraph conferring on me the highest order possible to my rank in the official hierarchy. He told me that people had the most erroneous ideas about the reasons for my retirement. This audience, which took place at Reichenau in August, 1918, was the second occasion on which I saw the Emperor after my resignation. My last audience came soon afterwards.

It took place on 25th September, 1918, a beautiful, sunny autumn day. I went to Baden to thank the Emperor for my appointment as president of one of the senates of the Administrative Court. I had been told to appear at nine a.m. From the *Kaiserhaus* at Baden, where I arrived a few minutes before the appointed time, I was conducted to a villa in the Franzensring, called "Bohemia" after the owner, where the Emperor had recently taken to giving audiences. The Grand Prior of the Order of the Knights of Malta, Fra Joseph Count Haddegg, Field-Marshal Baron Rohr, General von Gaudernak, General Count Bissingen, General von Kusmanek, the heroic defender of Przemyśl, Dr. Mikeš, a chief of section in the Private Office, who died soon afterwards, Count Franz Thun and some other gentlemen waited with me in a ground-floor room looking on the garden. There was an oppressive, uneasy atmosphere among us. But the house was full of movement and bustle and the telephone bell rang continuously. Messengers came and went. The ex-Minister of the Interior, Ritter von Gayer, rushed up in a motor, and was summoned immediately to the Emperor, without passing through the



audience room. The aide-de-camp told us that it was not certain that the Emperor would be able to receive us, as an important message, which had just arrived, necessitated his going to Vienna immediately. We no longer looked for any good news and feared the worst. The Grand Prior, Baron Rohr, and General von Gaudernak were received in rapid succession. While we waited, Ritter von Gayer told me that he would go to Vienna with the Emperor after the conclusion of the audiences; very bad news had arrived from the Front. The situation was hopeless.

My turn arrived. The aide-de-camp led me into the garden and announced me to the Emperor, who beckoned me in friendly fashion. He came to meet me, and, cutting short my speech of thanks, held out his hand and asked me why I came to see him so seldom. Without waiting for my reply, he told me that Bulgaria had laid down her arms and withdrawn from the Quadruple Alliance. The situation, bad enough in itself, would be made even worse by the disastrous defeat in Turkey and the incipient collapse of the Western Front. It was the beginning of the end. The Emperor was very grave, but, in contrast to all the other people who were bustling about the house or waiting, he showed no trace of nerves. He was calm and spoke clearly and firmly. What he had always feared, and what people had always refused to believe, was now about to happen, a decision against the Central Powers as a result of the entry of the United States into the War. I did not conceal my fear that the reckoning would be a terrible one, but said that the Emperor personally was protected by his repeatedly announced intentions of making peace. It was well known that he had staked everything on concluding a peace. The Amnesty of 1917 would now have a beneficial effect.

"The Amnesty," rejoined the Emperor, "has politically been a failure. You know well what made that act of mercy my bounden duty and what political results I expected from it, and you also know why it failed." I ventured to object that, without the Amnesty the moment would now have arrived in which the Czechs would have taken a bloody revenge on the House of Austria for the Battle of the White Mountain. The revenge would, of course, not fail to come, but it

would be peaceful and without bloodshed. That was one successful result of the Amnesty which should not be underestimated. "God grant that you are right," replied the Emperor, "but the reports from Bohemia are anything but reassuring."

The conversation then turned, I have forgotten in what connection, on the Emperor Wilhelm. I said that the German Emperor would have to bear a heavy responsibility for Germany's uncompromising spirit. As if I had touched him in his most sensitive spot, the Emperor positively sprang up and said in passionate tones: "You must not say that. If there is any justice in the world, no one can make the slightest reproach against the Emperor Wilhelm. Among the leaders of Germany, he was the only one who saw the position in its true light from the very outset, and was of my mind in the peace efforts. But he could not impose his will. It would be terrible if he were to be made responsible. If he had had his way, we should have had peace long ago." The Emperor then reminded me of a conversation he had had with me at Reichenau in the summer of 1917.<sup>1</sup> "Don't you remember? I told you then how judicious the Emperor Wilhelm was, and what a difficult position he was in in face of the Prussian generals and statesmen, who were politically all ill-informed and wrong-headed, and that he foresaw that the obstinate determination of the Supreme Army Command on a victory peace would be fatal, but that he could not and dare not break this determination? The Emperor Wilhelm hoped that the War would be ended in time, before the collapse of the Empire, through Austria. It is obvious, however, that officially he was obliged to have no knowledge of my peace efforts in the spring of 1917. Yes, the Emperor always displayed sound

<sup>1</sup> On 17th September, 1917, I accompanied the Emperor on an excursion to the mountains. During the drive I submitted several papers to him. Then we left the car to take a walk. In the course of our conversation we touched on the Amnesty. "Although it has obviously not been successful," said the Emperor, "even if I were on my death-bed I should still regard it as a necessary and just measure. No one will ever persuade me to the contrary." Later we spoke of the Emperor Wilhelm, in connection with Germany's determination not to yield. The Emperor said: "The Emperor Wilhelm is a poor prisoner in his Empire. If he had had his way we should have had peace long ago. He is the only reasonable man in Germany."

judgment. But at that time sound judgment, as you well know, was regarded as high treason. I shall be responsible in the same way as, and no less than, the Emperor Wilhelm. The persons really guilty of the War and its prolongation will not only escape scot-free, but will also sit in judgment on us."

The Emperor spoke excitedly to start with, but afterwards calmly and firmly. I wrote down the words of the conversation, according to my custom, after the audience, so that it is reproduced practically as it was spoken. While the Emperor was speaking, an aide-de-camp came up with an urgent message. His Majesty stopped abruptly, patted me on the shoulder and said: "My dear Polzer, I am sorry I cannot stop any longer. But I shall send for you again very soon." He walked a little way towards the house with me and added: "Yes, we are coming to a difficult time, but we must keep our heads. And learn to think of the Emperor Wilhelm as I do and always have done. I can only say that we have always been loyal to each other." He then held out his hand and gave me a friendly smile. This was the last time I saw the Emperor and heard his voice.

With the exhaustion of the resistance of the troops in the West, we began to go downhill headlong. Under the pressure of the enemy, the manifesto of 17th October, 1918, was issued. It broke up Austria. When I learned about it two days before it was published, I was so disturbed that I went to the Prime Minister late in the evening to warn him. But I did not find him. Klimscha, a chief of section in the Cabinet Office, promised to pass on my warning immediately to Freiherr von Hussarek. Next day, several prominent politicians, Count Silva Tarouca, Prince Friedrich Lobkowitz, Count Galen, Professor Schumpeter, and some others invited me to a conference at the Hotel Meissl und Schadn, and begged me to warn His Majesty against this measure through the head of the Private Office. I did so and implored Seidler to see that the manifesto, if it was now impossible to stop it altogether, was not signed by the Emperor. A formula could surely be discovered, so that only the Government, only the Prime Minister, was responsible. I added that we had had fifty years in which to establish Austria on national federalistic foundations, but that it was too late now. Such a step, in the

circumstances in which it was taken, would be Austria's death-blow. Seidler told me that the business had gone too far to be stopped. The manifesto appeared a few hours after my interview with Seidler. The express declaration in the manifesto that the integrity of the Hungarian lands was in no way affected really went without saying: a manifesto of the Austrian Government could not apply to Hungary. In spite of this, the Hungarian Government had succeeded in inserting this passage by threats of stopping food supplies from Hungary. It was political blackmail on Dr. Wekerle's part. The effect of this qualification was inflammatory, and gave the manifesto the explosive power to blow the Monarchy into atoms, true, without consideration for the integrity of the Hungarian lands. Hungary broke away. She declared herself an independent sovereign State. Count Tisza, who, so long as the Germans were victorious, extolled the German alliance, worked politically with the Germans and always found them ready to help, now, when misfortune had fallen on the Germans, was the first to declare at a public session of Parliament that for him the German alliance no longer existed.

Lammasch had in the meantime become Austrian Prime Minister. Before his appointment he asked me if I would accept the position of Minister of the Interior in his Cabinet. I refused, giving as my reason that to have a Hungarian common Minister directing our foreign affairs was not in harmony with the conditions that had arisen. It was impossible for an Austrian Prime Minister to submit to the foreign affairs of Austria being directed by a Hungarian, now that Austria and Hungary were separated.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, as Austrian Prime Minister, he would be able to accomplish nothing; nevertheless, I was of opinion, now that Hungary had broken away, that Austria required an independent direction of her foreign affairs. At the head of the Foreign Office, he might still, perhaps, be able to mitigate many evils.

Count Károlyi overtrumped his personal enemy, Count Tisza. If the latter did not give a fig for the German alliance, the former unhesitatingly dissolved Hungary's brotherhood

<sup>1</sup> Count Andrassy had become Minister for Foreign Affairs, and had established himself in the Ballhausplatz with a staff of Hungarian officials, including Prince Lajos Windischgrätz as first chief of section.

in arms with Austria—in execution of a unanimous resolution of the Parliament, it is true—by withdrawing the Hungarian troops from the South West Front, which was still holding firm, and thus causing its collapse. That was the catastrophe.

Austria-Hungary had ceased to exist.

The Army, bound by the military oath, was still subject to the commands of the Emperor. How far this power would have sufficed to protect the Crown is uncertain. The Emperor, however, refused to use it for his own advantage, and, in order to avoid further bloodshed, renounced the exercise of his sovereign rights in the manifesto of 11th November, 1918.

The Emperor also provided for a bloodless settlement in Bohemia, recognizing that the position there was untenable and foreseeing the menacing turn of events. On 22nd October, during a journey from Reichenau to Debreczin and Gödöllő, he received in the Court train Deputy Kľofáč, later a Minister of Czechoslovakia. General von Landwehr received him at the Franz-Joseph Station in Vienna. Kľofáč had come from Prague with the intention of proceeding to Switzerland to meet Beneš. Landwehr accompanied Kľofáč to Meidling. While they were waiting for the Court train at the station, the former spoke of the Austrian statesmen in very depreciatory terms. It was about 8.30 p.m. when Kľofáč and Landwehr boarded the Court train. Kľofáč was taken straight to the Emperor's office. His Majesty went to meet him, gave him his hand, and expressed his sympathy. Kľofáč had lost his eldest son a few days before; he had succumbed to wounds received on the Italian Front. The Emperor began the conversation in Czech. It was not till Kľofáč used German that the interview was carried on in that language. The Emperor said that enough blood had already been shed on the battlefields, and asked Kľofáč to use all his influence to ensure that, whatever might happen in the future, there should be no more bloodshed. Kľofáč said that this was also the desire of the Czech nation. According to his own account, the Deputy declared that the Czechs could not forget the persecution to which they had been subjected throughout the War. The Emperor replied: "This political persecution was the greatest political blunder." Kľofáč went on to say that the recent Governments, to which the Emperor

did not dissent, and, most of all, Count Czernin—to this the Emperor nodded assent—had been the greatest misfortune for the dynasty. Czernin's persuading the Emperor to go to Germany to announce to the German Emperor that our guns would give the answer to Clemenceau's revelations, and the Emperor's acceptance of the idea of a military and economic union with the German Empire, had set the Entente against the dynasty; this had led to the present situation. The Emperor replied that circumstances had been too difficult. The train was approaching Vienna. The Emperor repeated his request and said good-bye to the Czech leader. He had not said a single word of the projected journey to Switzerland.<sup>1</sup>

## VI

The picture formed of the Emperor Karl both at home and abroad does not even remotely resemble his real personality and character. He is known only in a distorted likeness drawn with deliberate malice by opponents of the Crown, by people who were hostile to him, who had been personally disappointed or deliberately set aside, and, finally, by men who allowed their political passions to degenerate into personal animosity. All of these laboured to produce this caricature, and displayed the utmost assiduity in insuring for it the widest possible circulation.

Very different is the picture formed by those who had the opportunity of working with the Emperor Karl. With the exception of the few, the motive for whose animosity I have shown in this book, all the former advisers and Ministers of the Emperor unreservedly pay tribute to his just political intuition, and to his gifts of mind and heart. He was reproached with weakness and too great readiness to yield. I perceived in him only a sense of justice, love of peace, and magnanimity, qualities which are no disgrace to any one. And readiness to yield is often a sign of wisdom. The opposite tendency may be fatal. Look at Ludendorff. The last thing they found to

<sup>1</sup> Memorandum book of the Czechoslovak Army, under date of 28th October, 1918.

say was that he was "not equal to his tasks." A glance at the conditions which prevail to-day in the territories of the former Hapsburg Empire must convince us that this is not a serious reproach. It was not until the Revolution that the true power was revealed of the passions and destructive forces against which the Emperor Karl had had to struggle unaided, and which the new masters of the new States have not yet, after ten years, succeeded in crushing. And as regards the Emperor Karl's influence on the course of events, an unbiassed estimate of all the factors which decided the downfall of the Monarchy leads to this conclusion, that the Emperor Karl stood outside the events which led to the World War. From the first day of his reign, it was his aim to put an end to bloodshed. He set his foot on the one and only path which could bring the War to a conclusion. His efforts found no support among his responsible advisers. It is further true that he regarded national reconciliation within the Monarchy as his foremost duty, and that in this he met with harsh opposition from the nations, led on by their leaders. It is also true that he displayed the greatest understanding of the requirements of a new age, and that with his innate sense of justice he was resolved to repay the people to the utmost of his powers for the terrible sacrifices the War had demanded of them. If he had been allowed he would have been the prince whose picture Wilhelm von Humboldt sketched in the following passage: "If there is any finer, more inspiring sight than a nation which breaks its chains asunder in full consciousness of its human and civic rights, then—since what inclination towards and respect for the law accomplishes is finer and more elevating than that which need and misery extort—it is an incomparably finer and more inspiring sight to see a prince who himself unlooses the chains and grants liberty, and who does this not out of his goodness and benevolence, but regards it as the fulfilment of his chief duty, which may not be left undone."

It was a marked characteristic of the Hapsburgs always to adapt themselves to the spirit of the time. The characteristic may be traced through all the centuries. The prevailing fashion had always a decisive influence on their mode of life, and the spirit of the time a decisive influence on their way of

thought. Thus the Austrian Court came to set the tone of fashion for the whole world. No other Court approached it in distinction and elegance. The age-old culture which found its external expression in the old palaces and castles full of valuable works of art, and in the traditional forms of etiquette, was merely the framework of their very modern lives. This capacity for adaptation to fashion and the spirit of the time found expression in some of them chiefly in the externalities of life; in others, in their way of thought. To the latter group undoubtedly belong the Crown Prince Rudolf, the Archduke Johann of Tuscany, his brother the Archduke Ludwig, and many others. The Emperor Joseph II was even in advance of his age.

In this respect the Emperor Karl was the most typical representative of his race. This was seen in his external life in many quiet characteristics. For example, he took a keen interest in all the great technical achievements of his time. On his desk he had several telephones, which he made use of in the transaction of State business. His method of working was not unlike that of the managing-director of a large modern industrial concern. While he was still Archduke, he was one of the first members of the Imperial House to substitute a motor-car for the traditional Court carriage. And he loved always to travel at the highest speed. He was familiar with the railway system down to the smallest details. He knew the traffic regulations as well as all the technical innovations. This caused me to say to him once that the Minister for Railways must have a difficult job. Hughes and telephone apparatus had always to be taken on the Court train, and it was connected up at the stations at which the train stopped. The Emperor used to say that in the present age of technical progress there should be no more obstacles to intercourse between the nations. He did not wish to be behindhand in the use of modern technical facilities. As is well known, he used an aeroplane for his last unfortunate enterprise. I believe that if he had been alive now he would never have used any other means of transport. In art, too, in which he was keenly interested, he preferred the works of living artists to those of the old masters. When we talked on this subject and disagreed, as we frequently did, he always said: "You know



my artistic catechism. Firstly, we must support modern art, secondly, I think modern pictures much finer, and, thirdly, I know very little about it, but I believe that many art critics do not know much more."

But it was not only in externals that the Emperor Karl was a man of his century. He thought on modern lines. He was a modern prince, the most modern of all those then reigning. He knew that a new age was approaching, which would change the rights and duties of princes. I could quote hundreds of the Emperor's sayings which show this quite clearly. His unbiassed and fair mind had no liking for the prerogatives of privileged social classes. He did, it is true, in outward form give them the honorary privileges due to them; he was extremely punctilious in this respect; but in his heart he valued the simple man of the people no less than the head of a princely house. This strange modern refusal of the Emperor to differentiate between social classes caused great anxiety and displeasure among the nobility. The head of a noble house who seemed delighted at the proclamation of the Republic, when asked the reason for his pleasure, said that he was quite glad at the turn of events, "for the Emperor would not have had much use for us." A member of the House of Lords whom I met in front of the Houses of Parliament in the spring of 1918 told me that he had just come from the Jockey Club, and was now going to the People's House in order to recover from the treacherous speeches he had been hearing from his fellow-peers. The open *Fronde* against the Emperor—this must be particularly emphasized—was restricted to the then large circle of the admirers, friends, and relations of Count Czernin, who was the very opposite of the Emperor. And these persons were influential members of the higher nobility, who set the tone in society. My own observations convinced me that the Revolution, in so far as it was directed against the dynasty, did not proceed from the lower strata of the people but was filtered down to them from above. If the paladins of the Throne, whose families had for centuries basked in the splendour of the Court, had not ignominiously left the Emperor in the lurch, if they had refrained from backing up the false propaganda against him, things might have taken a different turn, for at the beginning

the general populace thought very highly of the Emperor. The Emperor's deep feeling for natural justice, which had nothing to do with party, and which, undoubtedly, was greatly strengthened by the state of war, was fully recognized by the populace and even by the workers' leaders. This fact must be recalled. After an audience with the Emperor Karl, Deputy Staněk came to the Houses of Parliament and enthusiastically shouted in the lobbies: "We have a people's Emperor." The present social-democratic Burgomaster of Vienna, Karl Seitz, immediately after an audience with the Emperor Karl, declared to the gentlemen waiting in the ante-room: "We could wish for no better president of a republic than the Emperor." Almost the very same words were used by the Hungarian social-democrat, Diner Dénes, when he visited me at Reichenau in August, 1917, on his way back from Switzerland. After the Revolution, of course, opinions changed. We can scarcely, however, reproach the people for being misled by those who were in close touch with the Court and events, and for finally accepting a false and unfavourable view of the Emperor. The explanations I have given in the foregoing pages are the key to understanding how it came about that the mass of the population adopted a distorted view of the Emperor, and they are also the key to an understanding of events the blame for which is most unjustly put upon the people. The real culprits are rather the very men whose duty above all others was to be loyal, and who, to-day, are horrified at the treachery of which they themselves were the first to be guilty.

The Emperor Karl believed in humanity and in its loyalty and honesty, and he believed in it until he was convinced of the contrary. As a judge he displayed great clemency. When I had to submit requests for mercy, he almost always reduced the penalties contrary to the proposals of the Minister of Justice, especially in cases of little importance. At that time many penalties were imposed for profiteering. On one occasion when a poor peasant woman had sold hens and eggs at a little above the legal price and had been heavily punished, the Emperor said: "She acted wrongly, of course, but I never hear of any sentence imposed on the big profiteers of whom we have now so many. They are not caught. Why should

it be only the poor people who are strictly punished?" And he remitted the penalty imposed on the peasant-woman. Death sentences he never endorsed. Once he had to consider the case of a multiple murder. The Minister of Justice had requested that the plea for remittance of the death-penalty should be unconditionally rejected. The Emperor hesitated for a long time. He asked me for my advice, and I said that a reprieve in this case would be equivalent to the abolition of the death-penalty, which, however, was a not inconceivable idea. The Emperor found a pretext: "If we were dealing with a male murderer, I would have to reject the plea for mercy in this case, but this is a woman. And, therefore, I will temper justice with mercy."

On another occasion, the night of 10th to 11th February, 1918, when the Emperor was travelling from Transylvania to Budapest, the head of the Military Chancery, Freiherr von Marterer, was aroused at 12.30 p.m. by a telegram in which the counsel for certain rebels asked for a reprieve for the condemned. The message asked that the train should be stopped until the Emperor had given his decision. Freiherr von Marterer, who considered that a reprieve would have been unjustifiable, did not tell the Emperor of the telegram until he wakened in the morning. The Emperor reproached him vehemently and said: "You should have wakened me. I am only a human being." By that time the four ringleaders were already executed.

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The Emperor Karl took over the Government of Austria-Hungary as a heritage from his great-uncle, the Emperor Franz Joseph. It was a heritage of terrible responsibilities. All the questions which called for solution had been shirked for many decades, with the result that they had developed into almost insoluble problems. The policy of the pre-war period had nothing to show but this purely negative business of shirking, washing one's hands of difficulties and muddling along, which was elevated to a fine art. The rights that the Emperor Karl took over were hollow shams. But more than with all the Hapsburgs, and all the Austrian statesmen, the blame for bungling the vital problems of the Monarchy rests

with the deputies and professional politicians on both sides of the Leitha. It was they who, in conjunction with the nationalist party Press, incited the nations of the old Austria-Hungary against each other and wrought their ruin. It is not the "secret archives" of the Hapsburgs, but the archives of the Austrian and Hungarian parliaments and the provincial diets, and those of the editorial boards of the nationalist newspapers which show us where lies the real guilt for the misery of the peoples of the Monarchy. The task of the Hapsburgs, bound by their constitutional obligations, had long been a purely negative one, namely, to try to check the pernicious, disintegrating work of the professional politicians.

In the last days of the Monarchy events crowded on one another thick and fast. The leading politicians in Austria and Hungary assailed the Emperor and vied with one another in giving him advice. Every day he had to listen to the views of a dozen or so of politicians, who all put forward their views with equal vigour and made the most inconsistent demands, threatening terrible consequences if their advice were not followed. If the Emperor made up his mind to take one Minister's advice, others immediately rushed at him and painted in the darkest colours the results that would ensue. There was, of course, nothing extraordinary in all this. These things were the symptoms of the approaching end of a war of defeat. The Monarchy was in the convulsive throes of its death agony. A description of the chaotic conditions accompanying it would be outside the scope of this book. For me the drama of the Empire was over. I never saw the Emperor again. When he was at Eckartsau, he sent me a note of a few sentences in his own handwriting, asking me to draft a proclamation of protest. The chief point he wished me to make was that the proclamation of the republic was the work of a provisional National Assembly, the members of which had themselves granted themselves the mandate to represent the German-Austrian people. I sent a message to the Emperor that a proclamation of this kind would have no effect, as there was no means of bringing it to the knowledge of the people. I should prefer to save an Imperial manifesto from such a fate. A few days afterwards, the Emperor sent me a message that he wished to see me. In order that my visit might not attract

undesirable attention, I was to go to Siebenbrunn-Leopoldsdorf, where a servant would be waiting with a horse, so that I could ride to a fixed point in the Eckartsau park. Before I could carry out his wishes, the Emperor had left Austria.

He had never had the intention of going abroad. All the urgent persuasions of the new rulers glanced vainly off the Emperor's firm resolution to remain in Austria. It was not until the Government of the Republic went so far as to declare the Emperor outside the law, and therefore proscribed, that Lieutenant Strutt, an English officer, whom King George, anxious about the Emperor's safety, had sent to Eckartsau to protect him, arranged for the Emperor's departure. The Emperor's departure from Austria, sad as it was and keenly as we felt it, took a weight off the minds of all of us to whom the welfare of the sovereign and his family meant more than any political consideration. His Majesty left his country with unimpaired dignity. As Emperor, in the uniform of a field-marshal, he entered the Court train, which bore him to Switzerland. Their Majesties' faithful aide-de-camp, Naval Captain von Schonta, describes the scene in the following words: "At the station the worthy representatives of the Municipality and a few soldiers wearing their medals had assembled to say farewell to the Emperor and Empress. Hands were shaken and *au revoir* spoken. Strutt said to me: 'And they call this Revolution!' The eyes of this stiff Englishman were wet."

In the year 1921, a little before the Easter "Putsch," while I was at my country place in Slovakia, the Emperor sent a message to me asking me to go to Paris for a time, in order to get into touch with leading political circles. I was, he said, the only one of his friends who could give a correct report both of the problem of the old Monarchy and of the problems of the future. His Majesty asked me to come to Switzerland first to discuss the matter with him and receive further instructions. As I gathered from hints that the mission proposed for me was connected with the plan for a restoration of the Monarchy in Hungary, I asked the messenger to say to the Emperor that, as one of His Majesty's privy councillors, I was, of course, prepared to obey his commands, but that I considered it my duty to warn him urgently

against enterprises of this kind, because I believed that any attempt to alter constitutional conditions within the territory of the Monarchy at that time was completely hopeless. An abortive attempt would, however, be very prejudicial to the Monarchist principle. Moreover, it could be assumed with certainty that, even if the French statesmen allowed themselves to be convinced of the justice of the arguments adduced, they would not agree to any deviation from the national State principle nor to the restoration of the Hapsburgs.

Very soon after the failure of the "Easter Putsch," I learned to my consternation that a second attempt had been planned for the autumn. I did not fail again to give urgent warning against it in the proper quarters. I pointed out that the Magyars could not be relied upon, as an overwhelming majority of them believed in the free election of their sovereigns, and that the Little Entente would show a united front against any attempt at restoring the Monarchy, not least because the nations which it represented would never endure a revival of the hated Magyar claims to supremacy. In view of these more than doubtful prospects, it would be dangerously optimistic to rely on the help of the Entente, especially as their alleged sympathy for a restoration of the Hapsburgs was, in my opinion, not genuine, and the Ambassadors' Conference had repeatedly and expressly taken a diametrically opposed view. Such were my convictions, the correctness of which was unfortunately confirmed by the melancholy events which followed. I learned later, through publications on the subject that have appeared since, of the ostensible safeguards provided for the enterprise. I do not know whether they contain a complete account of the measures taken. I cannot make up my mind. But I have the impression that the enterprise was not adequately safeguarded. According to my own knowledge of the subject, so far as the Little Entente was concerned, nothing was secured but the promises of some small organizations which seem to have taken a very optimistic view of the situation. As for the Great Entente, France gave only a very vague assurance of benevolent neutrality, which might have meant nothing but a trap. The preparations made in Hungary, however, seem to have been totally inadequate. Optimistic hopes were represented to the Em-

peror as facts, with the best intentions in the world, it is true. So he, thus ill advised, believed that he must answer the call of his loyal subjects. He had to have the experience of being received with machine guns in the country of which he was the crowned King.

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I was afraid that I had forfeited my Emperor's gracious regard by my repeated, honestly meant, warnings. Much later, I learnt to my joy and satisfaction that His Majesty retained his confidence in me, and in his exile recalled my services in the following words: "Whenever I could trust anyone completely, whenever anyone was prepared to follow me through thick and thin, that person was deliberately torn from me. That is what happened with Count Polzer."<sup>1</sup> These words gave me the comfort of knowing that the Emperor was to the end convinced of the sincerity of my advice and the loyalty of my sentiments.

When the news of the death of the Emperor came over the wires on 1st April, 1922, it was as if the world held its breath for a moment and remembered the crime it had committed. A noble prince, misrepresented by the world, persecuted, outlawed, and robbed of the glittering crown of his fathers and all his possessions, had died a saintly death on a lonely island, far from his homeland. Everyone was moved by his tragic fate. But for those who remained unalterably loyal to him, to whom he was still their master and Emperor, it was as if a cruel and ruthless destiny had bolted behind them the gate of the past.

<sup>1</sup> See the article by Carl Freiherr von Werkmann, *Der Kabinettsdirektor*, in the *Neues Wiener Journal* for 12th February, 1928.

## EPILOGUE

I HAVE come to the end of my task, and should, properly speaking, lay down my pen. But I do not wish to conclude my observations of the last years of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy without casting a fleeting glance at the picture which the past casts on the mirror of the future.

A time of suffering separates the present from the days I have tried to describe in retrospect. The War brought sorrow, poverty, and privations. It hurled down thrones and tore empires into tatters. It cost millions of human lives, broke up the lives of millions more and, finally, brought before our eyes the menacing spectre of world revolution. Moreover, the terms imposed on us by our enemies for long robbed us of all hope.

A chapter of the world's history closed with Versailles and St. Germain. The next was not rung in with joy-bells. A dictated peace can never be an enduring peace. The armed warfare is at an end. But the differences between the peoples of Europe are far from being settled; peace between the nations has not been established. The treaties which broke off the World War were a terrible illusion of peace, under the poisonous effects of which all the nations of Europe are wasting away, and in which, moreover, lurks the danger of renewed warfare.

In blind, fanatical hatred, the nations of the old Monarchy pulled down their house. In the name of "liberation of the nations and self-determination," peoples of different race, speaking different tongues, were with ruthless cruelty imprisoned within the narrow limits of States in which one nation assumed domination, while the other nations and fragments of nations were without rights. The nationalities question was not solved by the destruction of the Monarchy; it rather was raised to intolerable acuteness in the Succession States. These so-called national States are, however, totally incapable of surviving, not only on account of their unsound national conditions, but also because of their economic insufficiency.



The legend "Morituri" is inscribed on their brows. They now possess the full independence, the "constitutional rights" they dreamt of. But they cannot be altogether rejoiced over this, for their independence is little else than impotence. What enabled the little nations and fragments of nations in the old Danube Monarchy to survive, what brought them happiness and prosperity, was their authority, their self-sufficiency in a great, common economic system. Under the protection of a Reich, mutually dependent on each other, supplementing each other, they could live and develop. It was not chance or the caprice and ambition of a princely race that built the house of Austria in the south-east corner of Europe. This Austria, whose *raison d'être* was the union of all the little nations and fragments of nations incapable of surviving alone, was the foundation of their existence. The so-called Peace Treaty gave its assent to the destruction of Austria. One is doubtful whether a complete lack of understanding of the ethnical structure of the Danube Empire and of Central European politics or ill-will played the greater part here. One is tempted to ascribe a great deal to the former factor, for by the Peace our enemies not only did violence to those to whom they wished ill, but they gave only Greek gifts to the nations whom they favoured. And, over and above all this, they plunged the whole of Europe into a permanent state of political and economic bankruptcy.

With the recognition of the untenability of the political conditions in Central Europe created by the Peace, the alarming question automatically presents itself, how is the future going to shape? The most varied demands and ambitions are buzzing in the air, attachment of German-Austria to the German Empire, a Danube Federation, economic and political alliances of all shades and colours. I should be false to the political course I have long followed, which culminated in a demand for the solution of the nationalities problem through the traditional Austrian super-nationalism, with each one cherishing his own national character and respecting that of others, if to-day I felt in sympathy with the idea of the union of German-Austria with Germany, which is based on the principle of nationalism. I am not, of course, overlooking the fact that the question must to-day be regarded from another angle

than that from which I regarded it in the days of the Monarchy, when the Pan-Germans with their treacherous ambitions set at nought the sovereignty of Austria in their efforts to establish the sway of the Hohenzollerns. To-day economic considerations cannot be left out of account. There is no doubt that the realization of the economic weakness of German-Austria is the strongest motive of the idea of union with Germany. I do not intend to go more closely into the economic consequences of such a union here, but I shall not conceal the fact that I am unable to take these consequences into account except in a rather negative sense. I want to discuss the question entirely from the national political point of view. And from this point of view, I see it in quite a different light from the usual one. Central Europe is to-day, as before, in a state of becoming, it is still in fermentation. The existing forms cannot be regarded as stable, for the conditions in the Succession States and in the Balkans are worse than they were before the war. They press for a new settlement. It would be a great mistake to give this not yet firm, still fluid physical condition of Central Europe the first push towards fixation by the union of German-Austria with Germany, and thus reinforce the national petty States. The *Anschluss* would give the world to understand that the Germans reckoned on the stability of the Central European situation as created by the Peace, for it would mean its further consolidation and, implicitly, its recognition. And this, viewed from the national standpoint, would be not a great achievement, but a betrayal practised on the millions of Germans who live within the old boundaries of the former Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, and who to-day are languishing in the prison of so-called national States, as a result of the same national State principle to which the super-national Austrian principle was sacrificed.

I consider that a union of German-Austria with Germany would be fatal, because I should regard it as the final renunciation of the great Hapsburg tradition of unifying the nations, of that old federalistic idea of Empire, on which the old German Empire, the great mother country of our forefathers, was built up in harmony with the German character and the ethnical conformation of Central Europe. For it is only on this natural foundation of super-national federalism

that the German nation can fulfil its great cultural mission, and develop Central Europe, its natural sphere of influence, into a strong and unassailable bulwark of European peace. The centralizing national State system which set in with the rise of Prussian dominion disturbed this natural development, and ultimately stopped it altogether, and thus made Central Europe what it is to-day, the cockpit of warring nations, who, although their territories are not closed, have erected their national States and intend to maintain them in accordance with the principle of nationalism. The national State idea may be applicable in the West, where ethnical and State boundaries coincide; it is not applicable in Central Europe. A glance at an ethnographical chart makes this immediately clear. The German people can, it is true, point to a broad, closed territory which justifies the national State policy in a restricted sense. I do not dispute that. But the Prussian method failed in its application to the Empire, for our glance at the ethnographical chart shows that millions of Germans, outside present-day Germany, are distributed all over Central Europe in larger or smaller territories, and live among other nations. This is particularly true of our former Monarchy. The German natural sphere of influence should not be restricted to the limits drawn by the Little Germany, the Bismarckian solution. This solution made Prussia greater, but Germany smaller. The struggle between Prussia and Austria for dominance in Central Europe was, it is true, settled by arms at Königgrätz in favour of Berlin. But the centralizing Prussian system, based on the principle of nationalism, suffered a defeat much more important for the history of nations than the Battle of Königgrätz had been; for the dismemberment of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, and the conditions which prevail to-day in its former territories, show all too clearly that the Prussian national State principle based on nationalism, which is bound in self-defence to be imitated by the various nations, was not applicable to Central Europe and turned the larger part of it into a heap of political ruins.

The national madness bred by nationalism created among all the peoples of the Danube Monarchy an atmosphere which was poisoned by the miasma of selfish national self-glorification, hatred, and intolerance. This atmosphere of whipped-

up international hatred was bound to have a disintegrating, and in the end destructive, influence on the Hapsburg Empire, which was a conglomeration of nations. The Emperor Karl, true to the tradition of his House, tried to oppose nationalism with super-nationalism. But all his attempts to destroy international animosities were crushed by the ever-recurring theme of the "fight of the Germans against the Slavs." And if we cast a glance at the heap of ruins which rises to-day on the fields of the beautiful and happy Austria of old, if we consider the men and women, demoralized by loss of rights, grief, and misery, and robbed of all their joy in life, and perceive how they have declined from the heights of an old traditional culture to the depths of moral and material impoverishment, we are looking at the consequences of nationalism, the most terrible of all the political maladies that affect humanity. And we recognize the truth in Grillparzer's words: "From humanism through nationalism to bestialism."

The War with its attendant phenomena ought to have been our great teacher. But it seems as if the nations will not learn; for now as before the poison of national hatred works its disintegrating will on nations and men, further reinforced by the urge for vengeance. Now as heretofore nationalism is on top. Under the modern banner of Fascism the bourgeois element with terroristic methods is fighting nationally against the middle classes of other countries, socially, against Marxism. And against the middle classes thus split into hostile ranks are arrayed the closed ranks of the international proletariat.

So long as the middle classes remain uncured of their morbid, hate-inspired nationalism, so long as the national State idea haunts the brains of politicians and the mad idea prevails that only here can love of country find expression, so long will all political combinations, all treaties concluded by the Succession States and their neighbours among themselves and against each other, and all attempts to revive and protect economic life by means of customs and commercial treaties, closing of frontiers and the like, be of no avail to check the threatening collapse of Central Europe. For the course of events is not trending in the direction aimed at by the professional

politicians; according to iron laws, the logical consequences of human conduct are making themselves felt. Hate will always breed war among the nations; conciliation alone can bring peace.

As many good as bad instincts slumber in the people. The only question is which instincts are awakened by their teachers and leaders. Humanity can be trained in national self-glorification and national intolerance just as easily as in the contrary qualities.

The most important thing is to create the fundamental preliminary conditions for human understanding; that is the first step towards the reconciliation of the nations, and, therefore, towards the solution of the great international problem. But how can men come to an understanding, if of their own accord they surrender their freedom to the Moloch of the State, and elevate it into a colossal factor of power, and if this State, under the combined party dictates of nationalists and socialists, deprives its citizens of their rights and drives them on the road either to nationalism or State socialism, both equally false? Because the States have become compulsory cultural and economic societies, because they are progressively overstepping the limits of their proper spheres and extending them to almost all areas of human activity, because they are making the whole of civilized life dependent on them, and are training the children in their schools to class and race hatred, because they are not only crippling economic life within their own borders but are practically ruining it in international commerce, the States both at home and internationally are creating a state of terrible national and economic tension, which makes the possibility of ever bringing about happy and peaceful conditions more and more remote. The modern social tendency is towards the organization of the social State, that is, a compulsory society in all departments of life. This tendency is with mathematical certainty leading to the conditions which we see in Russia to-day. The Marxist State has developed there more rapidly than in other countries, but the States of Central Europe are undoubtedly going the same road, although at a slower pace. They will, with or without an *Anschluss*, collapse unless men recognize before this happens that the peoples of Central Europe can successfully op-

pose the closed front of world-revolutionary Marxism only if they are united under the banner of a conciliatory super-nationalism, that is, in cherishing their own national characteristics and respecting those of others. The peoples must get rid of those leaders, those false prophets who set them on the road of nationalism, and wish to keep them on that road. And they must focus all their resolution and strength of will on the goal of restoring the State to its natural destiny, the purely constitutional State.

Many signs seem to show that nationalism has already reached and will soon have passed its zenith. Once it has got rid of this disease, Central Europe will soon resume its upward course. On its ruins, the old conception of reconciling the nations, the Hapsburg tradition for which the Emperor Karl would have given his life, will celebrate its resurrection from misery and poverty, because it still lives on in the hearts of the peoples. The old German Empire on a federalistic basis will arise again in a new form in harmony with a new age, because only in this form can peace, order, and prosperity be attained in Central Europe, and because it corresponds to a natural necessity. We must strive for this Empire as the home of peace, justice, and freedom for all the nations who have been for centuries united by ties of blood, and lived and worked together.

The great nationalities problem must be solved within the compass of the old Austria. *In hoc signo* alone can Central Europe complete its development. And thus the Hapsburg device will be fulfilled:

*"Austria erit in orbe ultima."*



## APPENDICES





## JOHANN ORTH

THE Argentine Police Authorities were also interested in Johann Orth's residence in South America. In the year 1899, a man who was living in the town of Concordia in the Province of Entre Rios, Argentine Republic, attracted the attention of the police by giving his name as Johann Orth, when notifying the loss of a pocket-book at the Prefecture of Concordia, not suspecting that this assumed name was better known than his real name. The police discovered that the man gave himself out to be a merchant from Austria, and that he was in the habit of frequently, though not regularly, visiting the inn of a certain Don Pedro in a suburb of Concordia. He never spoke to anyone, nobody was acquainted with him or visited him, he always appeared sunk in thought, and always paid his bill in gold. On one occasion he dropped several gold pieces and an order on a red ribbon. The police made investigations and found that he lived in the Province of Entre Rios, down the river from Concordia, in the house of one Nino de Villa Rey, a distinguished Italian gentleman. Police officers once watched him taking a walk with a lady in the evening in the neighbourhood of the house of Signor Villa Rey, idyllically situated on some high ground; he afterwards went into the house. Soon after this, he left for a lumber farm belonging to Signor Villa Rey, at Chaco on the River Paraguay. When the police asked Signor Villa Rey directly about the person living on his lumber farm, he replied that the name of the Austrian in question was Hirsch, a statement which was later proved to be false. The Argentine police authorities communicated their discoveries to the Vienna police. The reply came through the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and was to the effect that His Majesty wished to deal with the affair directly with the Concordia Chief of Police, Boglich by name, who had made the report. Suitable remuneration was promised for an exact investigation into

where Johann Orth was staying. Boglich asked that data to enable identification to be made should be forwarded from Vienna, which was done. However, the Argentine police did not pursue the matter further. In the year 1903 Don José Boglich wrote the following letter (it has been translated from the Spanish) to Don Eugenio Garzón:

Chief of Police of Concordia (Argentine Republic)

Concordia,

23rd September, 1903.

To Don Eugenio Garzón, Ex-Senator of Uruguay, Paris.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I received your valued communication of 10th August last, and send you the following reply. Your own reserved and trustworthy character will enable you to excuse my inability to send you the notes forwarded to the Austrian Government. Nor would they be of much use to you, as they merely contain information about the residence of Johann Orth and a few personal details. With regard to the notes relating to Johann Orth's passing through Concordia, I do not think there is anything to prevent my telling you the course of events in strict confidence; you are already acquainted with part of it. When Johann Orth was passing through here in 1899, he put up at the same Station Hotel as yourself. The police were then keeping an eye on certain individuals of bad reputation who were fond of travelling through to Upper Uruguay, and, as a result, a commissioner turned his attention to a man who was staying in the above-named hotel and who described himself as "Johann Orth, Austrian, merchant."

There is no doubt whatever that this was his name, especially as it was printed on a metal plate on his luggage. You were the first, as you will remember, to put the idea into my head, two days after he left, of inquiring into Johann Orth's place of residence. We succeeded in discovering that he had gone with Signor Villa Rey to the settlement at Yerua. According to the conjecture of the officer who had been watching him, he left the settlement a few days later owing to the incautiousness of the local Police Commissioner, taking the

steamer for Concordia. There he went by train to Upper Uruguay, after he had been joined by a lady, who accompanied him on the rest of his journey.

Investigations made later showed that Johann Orth had proceeded to Chaco on the River Paraguay, to work on Signor Villa Rey's lumber farm.

As I heard nothing more about him, I decided to write to Signor Villa Rey, whom I knew personally and who, I was sure, would give me some information. My letter was sent off in December, 1899, and in February, 1900, Signor Villa Rey sent me an answer the nature of which you can best judge by reading the original letter, which is enclosed. Its contents show that he, being of a chivalrous character, was trying to hide Johann Orth out of friendship. This confirms the account given by a labourer of Villa Rey's, German Acuna by name, who returned to Yerua from Chaco and assured the Commissioner of the settlement that Johann Orth was at the camp at Chaco. He was asked whether he knew a Herr Hirsch, the man referred to in Villa Rey's letter, but he replied that there had been no such person there, and that he had never even heard the name. Acuna added that Johann Orth always spoke Italian with his employer, and that the latter always treated him with very marked attention.

Since then I have not heard any more about this person. Such, my friend, is my information about this affair, which circumstances have made convincing.

With very kindest remembrances,

Yours sincerely,  
JOSÉ BOGLICH.

On 28th November Boglich sent Don Eugenio Garzón a second letter, in which he informed him that Johann Orth had disappeared. The manager of Signor Villa Rey's undertaking, in which the Archduke was employed in the year 1900 had told him that Johann Orth had started for Japan before the outbreak of the war with Russia.

These letters were published by the addressee in Paris in the year 1906.

## II

*Extract from an article in the evening issue of the "Pester Lloyd" for 10th January, 1924, by the Hungarian ex-Minister Kristóffy on the Emperor Karl's knowledge of Franz Ferdinand's Political Programme.*

The Archduke Franz Ferdinand sent for me in May, 1912, when he was already haunted by dark forebodings, and in the course of our interview addressed to me the following words: "I want to entrust to you a secret, which no one knows except my wife. The Almighty holds the lives and destinies of all of us in His hand. In our ignorance of His decrees, my nephew the Archduke Karl and myself have come to an agreement to be put in force in the event of anything happening to me before I ascend the throne. I have assured him that I will respect his rights, and he has promised me, in the event of his becoming Emperor first, to recover the rights and possessions of the Monarchy and the Army which have been thrown away. We have drawn up a deed embodying this agreement and deposited it in the family archives. My nephew understands my plans, as he is a very intelligent young man, and," concluded the Archduke, "I now want you to give me a solemn promise that if the event I have mentioned occurs you will report to my nephew."

Deeply moved, I gave the desired promise and the Heir Apparent shook me by the hand. I will only say further that I have no longer any interest in concealing the truth in any way. I assert on my word of honour that the above-described incident happened in the exact way I have related it.

## III

*A Declaration of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand*

The alteration in the designation of the Minister of War from "Imperial Minister of War" (*Reichskriegsminister*) to

"Minister of War" has been effected without my having been consulted.

This alteration, which I have repeatedly opposed both in speech and in writing, is a revolutionary constitutional change which may have the most far-reaching consequences. This measure, which is in no way substantiated by the Compromise Laws of 1867, is a submission to the nationalist demands of Hungary and a fresh concession to the separatist school, which denies the existence of a unified Empire.

Since the designation, "Minister of War," was decreed by the Imperial holograph of 20th September, 1911, but not fixed by a Fundamental Law of the State, while the title, Imperial Minister of War, was fixed by statute, it appears that this alteration is not binding on me in the future.

In face of the accomplished fact, there is no course open to me but to guard myself in the most decided manner against this alteration in title, and solemnly to declare that I reserve the right to restore the legal designation of "Imperial Minister of War" when I am in authority.

ARCHDUKE FRANZ FERDINAND OF  
AUSTRIA-ESTE.

Schloss Blühnbach,  
October, 1911.

#### IV

##### *The Crown Prince's Locked Portfolio*

On one of the first days of the Revolution, the documents belonging to the Emperor's Private Office were transferred to the House, Court and State Archives. As the Private Office no longer existed at that time, and I was present, being in the course of moving from the Hofburg to my private house in Vienna, I was asked to assist in this official act, which had been undertaken by an official of the Archives. The portfolio was opened. It contained toilet articles, a book, a letter case with some worthless banknotes in it and a flat ash tray

made of onyx ornamented with gold or gilded bronze eagles' claws. On the inner side of the ash tray the following words had been hastily written in purple ink: "A revolver, not poison, a revolver is surer." The handwriting was obviously that of the Baroness Mary Vetsera. This ash tray with the words written on it may be the only authentic written document on the Mayerling tragedy. As I assisted at the transfer only in the capacity of witness, I was unable to influence in any way the fate of these objects.

From all I have learned about the tragedy of Mayerling in the course of the years, I have become convinced that, in spite of facts that seem to support this theory, the death of the Crown Prince was not entirely a love tragedy. My brother-in-law, Marquis Bacquehem, who was Minister of Commerce at the time, told me that he had read the telegrams that passed between the Crown Prince and the Baroness Mary Vetsera. A custom had grown up that all the telegrams to or from members of the Imperial house should, after despatch, be sent by the head of the Telegraph Department to the Minister of Commerce, who submitted any that seemed important to the Emperor through the Private Office. Their telegraphic correspondence showed quite plainly that the Baroness's love had become an inconvenience to the Crown Prince. This was quite obvious in spite of the careful language in which his refusals were couched. The motive for the Crown Prince's suicide has always remained a mystery, but it must have been an affair of a political nature, in which not only the Crown Prince but also the Archduke Johann of Tuscany, later known as Johann Orth, were involved. It must have been an extremely serious matter, for the suicide undertaken jointly with the Baroness Vetsera was proved in all its details, was beyond question, and was, in fact, acknowledged. Why then was something connected with it kept a strict secret? The people who might have known something about it have gone to their graves without speaking. The documents relating to the death of the Crown Prince were, at the Emperor Franz Joseph's express orders, deposited not in the archives of the Ministry of the Imperial House, but handed over to the then Prime Minister and confidant of the Emperor, Count Eduard Taaffe. When the sealed packet was opened in 1912,

only blank scraps of paper were found in it. The documents had been removed.

The Countess Larisch-Wallersee, a cousin of the Crown Prince, used to tell a romantic story which suggested that some very serious matter was in question. She said that a few days before the Mayerling tragedy the Crown Prince handed over to her a small steel box sewed into a handkerchief, saying that he was in the gravest danger, as the Emperor might at any moment order a search to be made of his house and effects, and this box must not be found among them. Only one person knew of its existence. The box must be handed over only to this person, after he had proved his identity by giving as a password the letters R.I.U.O. A few days after the tragedy, the Countess received a letter signed with these initials, asking her to be at a certain place at a certain hour in the evening. When she got to the rendezvous, a man came to meet her, wrapped in a cloak and with his hat well pulled down over his face. He proved his identity by giving the letters R.I.U.O., and she handed him the box. As the stranger lifted his hat and stepped into the light, she recognized the Archduke Johann of Tuscany, later known as Johann Orth. He asked her whether she knew what was in the box. She said no, whereupon he remarked that he had been afraid she would give it to the Empress Elizabeth. If she had done so, she would, instead of being banished from the Court, as happened on account of her alleged encouragement of the relations between the Crown Prince and Mary Vetsera, have been made a Duchess. She had not been able to save the life of "that coward Rudolf," but she had saved her own.

From everything that has hitherto come to light about this tragedy of the Imperial House, we may infer, with a probability that almost amounts to certainty, that the Crown Prince Rudolf regarded death as the last and only solution of a terrible conflict of a political nature, and that Mary Vetsera, for love of him, accompanied him on his last journey.

A strange light is thrown on the Crown Prince's mental state at that time by the story of an event which for long remained unknown and which happened about a year before the tragedy. On 3rd January, 1888, a stag-hunt took place



at Mürzsteg. The Emperor had brought down four deer and two calves. The drive was nearly over, when the Crown Prince left his place to stalk a herd of deer. He fired a few shots, one of which almost grazed the Emperor Franz Joseph; the bullet hit the bearer, Martin Veitschberger of Mürzsteg, who was sitting behind the Emperor, on the underarm. It missed the Emperor by a fraction of an inch. Strict silence was maintained about this episode. The Crown Prince was not permitted to join the drives at Schwarzenbach and Geigergut on the following day. Freiherr von Mitis tells the story in his book, *Das Leben des Kronprinzen Rudolf*. The further particulars are taken from the lists which the Emperor kept with great exactitude of all the game he shot. It is one of the elementary rules of hunting that no gun should leave his place during a drive, a rule which is easily understandable both in one's own interest and in that of the other sportsmen, and which is never disregarded. The Crown Prince was such a good sportsman that no one thought of finding the explanation of his neglect of this elementary rule in anything except the fact that his mental and nervous state was no longer normal.

## V

*Guiding Principles drawn up by Count Czernin on 18th February, 1917, in German, and taken down by Count Erdödy to Count Czernin's dictation.*

(The original was destroyed at Neuchâtel,<sup>1</sup> after it had been translated into French by Prince Xavier. The following is a re-translation into German.)

1. The alliance between Austria-Hungary, Germany, Turkey and Bulgaria is absolutely indissoluble. A separate peace with one of these States is out of the question.

2. Austria-Hungary has never intended the destruction of Serbia. It is, however, necessary to provide guarantees which shall guard against the occurrence in the future of political

<sup>1</sup> Prince Sixte de Bourbon-Parma, *L'offre de paix séparée de l'Autriche*, pages 58-59.

intrigues such as those which led to the murder at Sarajevo. Moreover, Austria-Hungary has the intention of paving the way for friendly relations with Serbia by far-reaching economic concessions.

3. If Germany is willing to surrender Alsace-Lorraine, Austria-Hungary would naturally put no obstacles in the way.

4. Belgium must be restored and compensated by all the belligerents.

5. It is a great mistake to believe that Austria-Hungary is under the tutelage of Germany. On the other hand, the opinion is widespread in Austria that France acts entirely under English pressure.

6. Austria-Hungary also does not intend to destroy Rumania. But she must hold that country as security until she has received a guarantee for the maintenance of the complete integrity of the Monarchy.

7. Austria-Hungary has publicly declared that she is merely waging a defensive war, and that her aim will be attained the moment the free development of the Monarchy is assured.

8. In Austria-Hungary none of the various nations enjoys any privileges. The Slavs will always have the same rights as the Germans. Foreign countries have a wrong idea of the sentiments of the Slavs, who are loyal to the Emperor and the Empire.

## VI

### *The Emperor Karl's Addenda to the above Principles of Count Czernin.*

(The Emperor's original manuscript was torn up and burned at the request and in the presence of Count Erdödy, after Prince Sixtus had read it. Prince Sixtus reconstructed the text on 23rd February, 1917.<sup>1</sup>)

<sup>1</sup> Prince Sixte de Bourbon-Parma, *L'offre de paix séparée de l'Autriche*, pages 60 et seq.

*Confidential.*

To 3. We shall support France and put pressure on Germany with all the means in our power.

To 4. We have the greatest sympathy with Belgium, and know that it has been unjustly treated. The Entente and we shall make reparation for serious injuries.

To 5. We are most certainly not under the authority of Germany; for example, we refused to break with the United States against the will of Germany. It is believed in Austria that France is entirely under English influence.

To 7. Germany also.

To 8. With us there are no privileges for individual nations; the Slavs enjoy equal rights. Unity of all the nations and loyalty to the dynasty. Our one aim is to maintain the Monarchy in its present dimensions.

## VII

*Extract from Prince Sixtus's letter to the Emperor Karl, dated Paris, 16th March, 1917. (Translated from the French.<sup>1</sup>)*

But, in order to attain this result, there is only one means, and it is absolutely indispensable. That is, that you should as soon as possible declare to me in writing, in a clear and unequivocal manner, your acceptance of the four points. I am taking the liberty of enclosing a draft. I implore you to keep to this draft as closely as possible, in order to prevent the substance of it being watered down by the usual reservations of the Chanceries, which are most deplorable, as they waste valuable time, when we should be proceeding rapidly in order to anticipate events. If I cannot bring forward these four points in a clear and definite form, the authorities here will continue to be influenced by the first Note, which was regarded as quite unacceptable. . . .

<sup>1</sup> *L'offre de paix séparée de l'Autriche*, page 73.

## VIII

*Draft Note enclosed in the Above Letter of 16th March, 1917.*  
(Translated from the French.<sup>1</sup>)

1. Austria-Hungary, so far as is within its power, adjudicates Alsace-Lorraine to France, or that part of it which was formerly in the possession of France, and will use all the means at its disposal to support France's demand for the restoration of Alsace-Lorraine.

2. Belgium must be completely restored to its sovereign rights under the present dynasty, retaining all its African possessions, without anticipating the question of the compensation it may receive for losses suffered.

3. Austria-Hungary has never intended to destroy Serbia. We declare our willingness to restore Serbia to its sovereign rights under the present dynasty. Further, as a sign of good will towards this ~~in agreement, and~~ <sup>in agreement, and</sup> in order to ensure it a suitable and natural outlet to the Adriatic, Austria-Hungary is prepared to hand over to Serbia the Albanian territory at present held by Austria-Hungary. We are likewise disposed to encourage friendly relations with Serbia by means of far-reaching economic concessions.

4. Austria-Hungary proposes to enter into negotiations with Russia, on the basis of the Monarchy's adopting an impartial attitude with regard to Constantinople, in return for the restoration of the territories of the Monarchy at present occupied by Russian troops.

From the moment when these fundamental conditions are accepted, His Majesty the Emperor of Austria declares his readiness to maintain his troops in a waiting attitude in their present positions, provided that the opposing troops observe the same attitude.

In the event of the present agreement's being signed by France and her allies, and if Germany should oppose it and try to compel Austria-Hungary to abandon it, France and her allies should immediately with all their forces support Austria-Hungary in its resistance to this demand and against a declaration of war on the part of Germany.

<sup>1</sup> *L'offre de paix séparée de l'Autriche*, pages 81-82.

## IX

*The Emperor Karl's First Letter to his Brother-in-Law, Prince Sixtus of Bourbon-Parma, dated from Laxenburg, 24th March, 1917. (Translated from the German translation.)*

MY DEAR SIXTUS,

The third year of this war, which has brought so much pain and sorrow to the world, is approaching its end. All the nations of my Empire are more than ever united in a common resolution to protect the inviolability of the Monarchy even at the cost of heavy sacrifice. Thanks to the unitedness and to the cordial co-operation of all the nationalities of my realm, the Monarchy has for almost three years been able to withstand the most violent attacks. No one will be able to deny the military successes won by my troops, especially on the Balkan Front. France has on her side displayed great power of resistance and magnificent *élan*. We all unreservedly admire the splendid traditional valour of its Army and the spirit of sacrifice displayed by the whole of the French nation. It is a particular pleasure to me that, although we are now enemies, no real opposition of ideas and aspirations separates my Empire from France, and that I am justified in hoping that my keen sympathies for France, conjoined with those that prevail throughout Austria-Hungary, will in future be able to protect us against a recurrence of this state of war, for which I cannot in any way be held responsible.

For this purpose, and in order to give precise expression to the genuineness of these sentiments, I beg you, confidentially and unofficially, to inform M. Poincaré, the President of the French Republic, that I will support the just claims of France for the restoration of Alsace-Lorraine with all the means at my disposal and to the utmost of my personal influence with my ally.

With regard to Belgium, its sovereignty must be restored; it must retain its African possessions in their entirety. The question of any compensation for the losses it has suffered is not hereby anticipated. Serbia will be restored to its sovereign rights. As a pledge of our good will, we are disposed, in

accordance with the rules of justice, to give Serbia a natural outlet to the Adriatic and also far-reaching economic advantages. As a first condition and one that must be fulfilled, Austria-Hungary, on her part, will demand that the Kingdom of Serbia will in future abandon all connection with any society or group, with the "Narodna Odbrana" in particular, or suppress connections the political object of which is the dissolution of the Monarchy. Serbia must loyally and with all the forces at its disposal check all political agitation of this kind both in Serbia and beyond its frontiers, and must bind itself to act in this way under the guarantee of the Entente Powers. Events in Russia compel me to reserve my ideas on this subject until such time as a legal and definitive Government has been established in that country.

Now that I have explained my ideas to you in this way, I shall ask you, on your side, after conferring with both powers, to communicate to me the views of France and England, in order to prepare the ground for an understanding on the basis of which official negotiations may be instituted and brought to a conclusion satisfactory to all.

Hoping that we may as soon as possible bring to an end the sufferings of so many millions on both sides and of so many families now plunged in grief and anxiety, I beg you to believe in my cordial and brotherly affection,

KARL.

## X

*Prince Sixtus of Bourbon-Parma's Draft for the Emperor's Second Letter to Him, dated Neuchâtel, 5th May, 1917. (Translated from the German translation.)*

I note with satisfaction that France and England share the views which I regard as the main foundations for a European peace. They are, however, opposed to me in refusing to conclude peace without the participation of Italy. Italy has just offered to make peace with the Monarchy, having abandoned

all the impossible demands hitherto made to me with regard to the Slav lands on the Adriatic. She now confines her demands to the Italian Trentino. I have postponed the investigation of this demand until after I have received an answer to my peace offer from France and England.

To-day, therefore, I declare myself prepared to make peace with the Entente on the basis agreed upon with France and England, supplemented by the request of Italy and the point of view of Prince Lvov. This basis is in agreement with the points relating to Belgium and Serbia and France contained in my letter of 24th March. It further, as an answer to the disclosure recently made to me, admits of the surrender of the Italian-speaking Trentino to Italy, and, finally, as an answer to the disclosure of Prince Lvov, of the *status quo ante bellum* with regard to Russia and Rumania.

This conclusion of a separate peace between the Monarchy and the Entente, while the war between the German Empire and the Entente continues, cannot in any circumstances cause me to take up arms before the conclusion of the general peace. If, however, the German Empire, mistaking my sentiments towards itself, should attack the Monarchy, the Entente must assist me to the full extent of its power to repel this unexpected attack.

There is occasion for the immediate conclusion of an armistice pending the final conclusion of peace between the Monarchy and the Entente, during which my troops would remain in their present positions. Protected by this armistice, the mutual exchange of prisoners of war between the Entente and the Monarchy must proceed. The economic blockade between the Entente and the Monarchy must also be raised, so that the grain purchased in Russia by the Entente may be transported through Switzerland or Italy to France. . . . On the other hand . . . tons of the grain planted by the Germans in Rumania and Turkey may be transported without hindrance through Bulgaria and Serbia to Germany.

## XI

*The Emperor Karl's Second Letter to his Brother-in-Law, Prince Sixtus of Bourbon-Parma, dated from Laxenburg, 9th May, 1917. (Translated from the German translation.)*

MY DEAR SIXTUS,

I note with satisfaction that France and England share the views which I regard as the main foundations for a European peace. They are, however, opposed to me in refusing to conclude peace without the participation of Italy. Italy has just offered to make peace with the Monarchy, having abandoned all the impossible demands hitherto made to me with regard to the Slav lands on the Adriatic. She now confines her demands to the Italian Trentino. I have postponed the investigation of this demand until after I have received an answer to my peace demands from France and England. Count Erdödy will have acquainted you with my views and those of my Minister on the various points.

The good understanding between the Monarchy, France, and England on so large a number of important points will, I am convinced, overcome the last difficulties which still stand in the way of the conclusion of an honourable peace.

I thank you for your co-operation in this work for peace which I have undertaken in the common interest of our countries. This war, as you said to me at parting, has imposed on you the duty of remaining faithful to your name and the great past of your house, first, by helping the heroes wounded on the battlefield, and, secondly, by fighting for France. I understood your attitude, and though we are divided by events for which I have no personal responsibility whatever, my affection for you remains unchanged.

I consider it important that, if you are willing, I should continue to communicate my personal views to France and England through no agency but yourself.

I assure you once more of my cordial and brotherly affection.

KARL.



## XII

*Aide mémoire, dated Vienna, 9th May, 1917, composed by Count Czernin and given to Prince Sixtus at the same time as the Emperor's Second Letter.*

1. A one-sided surrender of territory by Austria-Hungary is out of the question; the idea might be discussed if compensation were given in the shape of other territory, provided that it is taken into account that the soil heroically defended by our soldiers and saturated with their blood is incomparably more valuable to us than any new territory could possibly be.

2. What guarantees are offered to us that at the Conference the integrity of the Monarchy (with the frontier rectifications now decided on) will be maintained?

3. A definite reply cannot be given until the above two points have been answered, when Austria-Hungary can enter into discussions with her allies.

4. In any event, Austria-Hungary is prepared to continue the conversations, and is still disposed to work for an honourable peace and thus prepare the way for a general world-peace.

## XIII

*Statement of ex-Minister Ottokar Czernin, published in the "Neue Freie Presse" of 17th January, 1920.*

Ex-Minister Ottokar Czernin to-day publishes the following statement:

In connection with the French disclosures about the peace efforts of the spring of 1917, which have only just been brought to my notice and that only in the form of a summary, I have to make the following observations:

1. The French revelations do not distinguish exactly between the official and non-official measures, because naturally enemy countries could not be clear as to which steps were taken with and which without the knowledge of the respon-

sible Government. As I have already stated several times, the oral negotiations with Prince Sixtus of Bourbon took place in Vienna under my responsible direction. Their object was to prepare the way for a general peace for our group of powers as a whole. The French statements published mention two documents emanating from me. The first, that of March, lays stress, as is correctly stated, on the indissolubility of our alliance; the second, that of May, is alleged, according to the Austrian newspapers now before me, to contain my desire for a separate peace. It is plainly merely a question of wrong interpretation of the contents.

The real facts are as follows: In May, 1917, I gave His Majesty the Emperor, at his own request, a document composed by myself, which was to serve Prince Sixtus as an *aide mémoire* in connection with the oral negotiations which had taken place. It read as follows:

- (1) A one-sided surrender of territory by Austria-Hungary is out of the question; the idea might be discussed if compensation were given in the shape of other territory, provided that it is taken into account that the soil heroically defended by our soldiers and saturated with their blood is incomparably more valuable to us than any new territory could possibly be.
- (2) What guarantees are offered to us that at the Conference the integrity of the Monarchy (with the frontier rectifications now decided on) will be maintained?
- (3) A definite reply cannot be given until the above two points have been answered, when Austria-Hungary can enter into discussions with her allies.
- (4) In any event, Austria-Hungary is prepared to continue the conversations, and is still disposed to work for an honourable peace and thus prepare the way for a general world-peace.

This *aide mémoire* supplemented the oral instructions, and in (1) opposes one-sided surrender of territory to the allies of the Entente without compensation (at that time compensation by means of the annexation of Rumania or Serbia was spoken of), demands in (2) guarantees against the decisions of the London Conference, and declares in (3) that we cannot

enter into conversations with our allies until we have received their guarantees.

Of a desire to conclude a separate peace, there is not a word in the note, and the French interpretation, communicated to me after the breakdown of the negotiations, that the "guarantees demanded" were meant as a protection against attack from Germany, could only have arisen out of those other later-mentioned communications, then unknown to me.

In any case it is quite correct that tolerable peace conditions offered to Austria-Hungary by the Entente would have made it possible for us to work more successfully in Berlin for a general compromise peace. So long as the Entente adhered to the promises with reference to our territory given to their own allies, the military power of Germany was our only protection, and this military dependence naturally affected our political influence in Berlin. But even in the event of securing a revision of the London Agreement, the Austro-Hungarian Government never intended to betray Germany, but merely to work with greater elbow-room for a general peace.

II. During my period of office I never heard of a peace offer from the Italian Government. Moreover, the French statements published show that Sonnino did not abate any of Italy's claims to territory based on the London Conference. Nor had I any knowledge whatever of a peace offer made by Cadorna or Kerenski, which an Imperial letter is alleged to mention.

III. The Emperor's letters and notes now published were written entirely without the knowledge of the responsible Government. This is proved by two documents in my possession, the original copy of a Hughes conversation which took place between His Majesty and me on 10th April, 1918, when I was at Bucharest, and a letter from His Majesty to me from Baden, dated 12th April, 1918, in which two documents, both dating from immediately before my resignation, His Majesty takes my complete ignorance of the Imperial letters for granted, and communicates to me the view he held at that time, which is identical with that which His Majesty expressed in the two well-known telegrams on the subject to the Emperor Wilhelm. The letter of 12th April was supplemented by an oral command from His Majesty to continue support-

ing in all quarters the view he had communicated to me in writing. The issue of the *communiqués* against Clemenceau and the information given to the public and our allies during the few days in which I remained in office were based on the Emperor's communications.

OTTOKAR CZERNIN.

8th January, 1920.

#### XIV

#### AN OFFICIAL REPORT

(Summary)

Prague,

6th April, 1918.

*The Royal and Imperial Police Commission of Prague.*

No. 3761.

Meeting of the Bohemian Deputies of Greater Prague. Budget questions and attitude to be adopted towards the proclamation of His Excellency Count Czernin.

On 4th April, 1916, a conference was held in Prague . . . of all the Parliamentary deputies of Greater Prague under the chairmanship of Deputy Wenzel Klofáč. At the same time a meeting was held in the house of Dr. Karl Mattuš, a member of the House of Lords, at which were present Dr. Karl Mattuš, ex-Minister Dr. Josef Fořt, Josef Wohanka, Aulic Councillors Dr. Jaroslav Hlava and Dr. Karl Vrba.

Both meetings had been organized by mutual arrangement; the conference of Deputies was chiefly concerned with budget questions—at least this was what was given out—but the subject of both was the attitude to be adopted towards the last proclamation of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Count Czernin. According to the reports, a lengthy debate was started, in which protests were made against the latest proclamation of Count Czernin, in so far as it affected the Czech

nation. This proclamation had roused all the Czech parties. The agitation of the deputies of the so-called Opportunist wing was obviously greater than that of the Radicals. Of the Opportunist wing, Dr. Šmeral and Dr. Fiedler, among others, took part in the debate.

The Radicals made fun of the proclamation: they declared that Count Czernin had shown his cards, and had allowed himself to be carried away by impotent anger and to be provoked by the Germans. Austria had done herself harm in the eyes of the whole world through his action. Germany itself had never officially taken such action against any people as Count Czernin had against the Czechs. It was absolutely undiplomatic and would merely strengthen the position of the Czechs before the international forum. Such speeches could not possibly have the designed and expected effect on the Jugoslavs, namely to alienate them from the Czechs, as the Jugoslavs had an even larger number of emigrants abroad than the Czechs, who were working for the Yugoslav state as the Czechs were working for an independent Czech state. Now the Jugoslavs would also have to take up a position with regard to the proclamation, and in this way the mass of the Jugoslavs, instead of being alienated from the Czechs, would be brought into closer union with them.

The Opportunists also criticized the latest proclamation. The form of it was quite inadmissible and precipitate. It had merely meant an enormous advertisement for Masaryk.

The work of the Opportunist wing, on the lines of an understanding with the Government by constitutional methods, was completely defeated, since those who still attempted conciliatory talk would forfeit their influence with the people and lose their confidence. The Opportunist deputies further maintain that the Czech nation has nothing more to lose: they have been undone by the senseless policy of the Government, and the radical policy is now the only one with any justification. The Opportunist deputies are bound to give tacit support to this radical policy, and even if there should be a change in the Government's present open attitude of hostility to the Czechs, it would convince no one, as we should know that it was not a real change.

A radical policy alone, moreover, will preserve peace at

home, because it diverts the attention of the people away from hunger and poverty, and is acceptable to them. Count Czernin is inciting to pogroms, inflaming the Germans against the Czechs, and abandoning the Empire to national and even anti-dynastic agitations and tumults.

This was the tone of the speeches of Drs. Šmeral, Fiedler, Franta, and Tobolka.

As we also learned from a confidential source, Dr. Mattuš, a member of the Upper House, expressed the opinion that Count Czernin's hatred for the Peace Party at Court could clearly be read between the lines of his proclamation. This Peace Party is reported to be supported by Their Majesties. The deputies had certain knowledge of this, and were also aware that His Majesty the Emperor had long been under the influence of the Peace Party, and had got his information from the Peace Party. This is known from an authentic source.<sup>1</sup> For those in the know, the proclamation of His Excellency Count Czernin means the complete victory of the Berliners, that is, the War Party at Court, and in consequence a complete breach with the nationalities. . . .

According to confidential information, Dr. Karl Mattuš expressed such views; he wished to go his own way, all the more so because one could see that the Czechs were no longer being governed from Vienna, but from Berlin, the branch establishment of His Excellency Count Czernin.

A radical deputy to the Reichsrat, according to a confidential communication from Klofáč, another Reichsrat deputy, stated that the Government, by such speeches as that of His Excellency Count Czernin, was turning the Czech nation on to the street.

It was resolved to summon a meeting of the Czech Union at Prague in the course of the next few days, which, in agreement with all the political parties, should take the measures necessary to avert the threatened disaster. The meeting should also define its attitude to the recklessness and folly of

<sup>1</sup> There never was a "Peace Party" at Court. The Emperor was resolved on peace. His policy was and always remained a peace policy. He had no need of being influenced in this direction. It was Count Czernin alone who abandoned his formal peace policy at Brest, under the influence of the gentlemen from Germany, and went over to the camp of the Prussian "victory peace" generals.

His Excellency Count Czernin, as well as to those who were inciting His Majesty the Emperor against the Czechs.

## XV

*An Unofficial View*

Budapest,  
14th April, 1918.

Interest is for the moment concentrated entirely on the Czernin-Clemenceau affair. Czernin's proceedings are absolutely incomprehensible to our circle. One gets the direct impression that his object is to injure the Emperor as much as possible. What an unheard of proceeding it is for a minister to provoke a scandal and then take refuge behind the person of the sovereign. We used to think that it was the function of the minister to protect the sovereign, even if the sovereign acted without the approval of the minister. This does not apply to Czernin, Tisza, etc., who have thrown loyalty to the winds. Otherwise there would be no understanding the denial of something by "Imperial Order" in an official *communiqué*.

Do you know what is being said about it in Tisza's circle? They are saying that Czernin has left the Emperor in the lurch; he refuses to take any more responsibility for him. In these circles and in Pan-German circles in Hungary, the view is held that there is now nothing left for the Emperor to do but abdicate. Of course! If the Emperor Karl had done something contrary to the interests of the Monarchy, these gentlemen would have been unanimous in praising him; but he has mayhap wounded Pan-German national feelings, and that demands a heavy penance.

The attitude of the newspapers is the most characteristic. The article was confiscated in the *Pester Lloyd*; the Tisza Press maintains silence or inserts little treacherous paragraphs; the socialist and radical Press, on the other hand, expresses the warmest sympathy with the Emperor.

I consider that too much fuss is being made about the affair. Suppose the Emperor did write the letter in the form in which Clemenceau published it. What then? It happened in March, 1917. Up to that time the Germans did not give a fig for our Italian interests. The change did not come till the autumn of 1917, by which time the Emperor's attitude to Alsace-Lorraine had also changed. The policy of the alliance is not a question of sentiment but of practical interests. A minister devoted to the Emperor was bound to argue in this way, whereas Czernin argued like a minister of the German Empire, who wants to get his poor devil of an ally out of the mess he is in, but actually keeps pushing him in deeper all the time.

Now for our domestic affairs.

Tisza bluntly rejected the compromise proposal last Wednesday, because he has made an arrangement with Czernin by which Wekerle is to remain in office for two or three months longer, in order to carry through the unpleasant requisitions and other matters of a similar kind; Czernin will then help Teleszky, or, it may be, Tisza, into the saddle. But on Thursday, when it became apparent that Czernin was as good as gone, the Tiszaists began to tiptoe away, and to start flirting again with the absolute necessity for a compromise. They at once found support among some of the Government people, especially the new Food Minister, Prince Windischgraetz. The latter is well known to be merely the puppet of Szterényi, the Minister for Commerce, who in his turn is the puppet of Berlin. Prince Windischgraetz intrigues here and in Vienna—extremely clumsily, it is true—and demands nothing less than the complete shelving of the question of electoral reform. I do not think that Prince Windischgraetz is aware of the motives of the men behind him; he is much too simple. To me these motives are quite clear.

Since the Emperor Karl has been on the throne, the reform of the electoral law has always been represented as his desire, as originating with him. This has won him enormous popularity with the mass of the population, which explains the present manifestations of sympathy with him.

If the question of electoral reform is now shelved, it would mean a loss of popularity for the Emperor, which is in the



interest solely of Berlin and of the Pan-Germans both here and in Austria. Therefore, at any price, we must keep electoral reform in the forefront, refuse to conclude any compromise with Tisza, and entrench the Emperor with the masses, who will afford him far greater security than all the Junkers with their revokable loyalty.

It is to be hoped that Vienna is keeping its head up.

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